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Tuesday May 13 1997

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46,862

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G2 with European weather

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Blair's privacy rights pledge

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

BRITAIN'S first law protecting personal privacy will form part of tomorrow's Queen's Speech, which will set out Tony Blair's agenda for change over the next 18 months, according to ministerial sources.

The new privacy measure, part of the legislation to incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law, will initially be used to give individuals access to British courts in actions against "the misuse of power by the state".

But ministerial sources hinted that it may later be extended to cover media intrusion, although the Convention also guarantees freedom of expression as well as respect for personal privacy.

The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, is also considering setting up a powerful Human Rights Commission which will involve radical reforms in the way the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality operate.

The new commission is still under discussion but it may lead to a multi-purpose body taking in the roles of the existing organisations dealing with racial discrimination, equal opportunities, disability rights and the Northern Irish fair employment laws.

The personal privacy measure will mean British citizens will no longer have to go to Strasbourg to get redress. They will be able to get rulings from judges sitting in London, Edinburgh and Belfast on whether their human rights have been abused — a faster system than spending up to nine years trying to get the case heard at Strasbourg. Ministers hope to sell the measure as "Bringing Rights Home to Britain".

The package, which forms "a long overdue first step" towards a bill of rights, will require ministers to certify that their legislation does not breach the European Human Rights Convention or similar United Nations treaties.

A joint committee of both Houses of Parliament will be set up to monitor the operation of the new act. It will be expected to play a "leading role in protecting the rights which are at the heart of a parliamentary democracy".

The legislation is expected to start life in the House of Lords where the demand for incoporation has been the strongest. Ministers believe the package is needed as part of their programme of "restoring trust in the way Britain is governed".

Britain became one of the most persistent offenders at the Strasbourg court in the past 18 years with the Tory government being found to have abused human rights in more than 30 cases. Among the landmark judgments have been the abolition of caning in British schools and criticism of the SAS shooting of IRA suspects in Gibraltar.

The decision to incorporate the European Convention means that a "right to respect for a private life" will be written into British law for the first time. However its effect will be phased in and privacy laws such as those which have prevented the French media printing stories about the personal lives of politicians will not initially apply.

Ministers have instead decided the law should apply to public authorities, including government departments, executive agencies, quangos and local authorities.

Strasbourg sources last night said that the experience of other countries of incorporating the Convention into national law had shown that domestic judges were "far more adventurous" in their decisions than the judges at the European Court.

The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham, has already said that in the absence of a statutory right to privacy, judges will begin to create their own case law.

Although Strasbourg has not ruled in any cases of media intrusion into personal private lives it is possible that the High Court in Britain will hear such cases after incorporation.

John Wadham, the Director of Liberty, last night welcomed the creation of an effective law of privacy against state intrusion. He said the new Police Act had already authorised trespass and failed to make bugging illegal. New technology was already moving on and it was essential that British citizens could have the means to protect their rights before they were abused rather than afterwards, said Mr Wadham.

Among recent cases which could in future be decided by British courts is one involving the commercial use of closed circuit video footage on national television. The case involved broadcasting material in which the cameras caught a man attempting to commit suicide.

Politics, page 5; Leader comment, page 8; Hugo Young, page 9

Spin doctor makes his pitch

Shane Warne, the Australian leg spin bowler, at a press conference with team-mates in London yesterday after their arrival for the Ashes tour Cricket, page 23 PHOTOGRAPH: CLIVE MASON

Guinness and GrandMet agree £22bn merger

Lisa Buckingham
City Editor

BRITAIN'S two largest drinks groups, Guinness and Grand Metropolitan, yesterday triggered a global realignment of major drinks manufacturers after agreeing a £22 billion merger.

The deal will create the world's biggest spirits maker — with brands such as Johnnie Walker, Bell's and Bailey's — and is expected to force other large groups such as Seagram and Allied Domecq to consider combining their firepower.

Until recently, drinks companies have been resisting the idea of cutting production capacity in an effort to reduce costs and improve profits.

The merged companies, to be called GMG Brands, will cement Britain's domination of the global drinks leagues, but the deal is likely to involve about 2,000 job losses out of a worldwide total of 85,000. The job cuts should take about three years to implement.

The company will become the world's seventh biggest food and drinks company and Britain's eighth largest group, eclipsing the likes of Barclays and drugs giant Zeneca.

The merger is the second blockbuster deal since Tony Blair became Prime Minister and further corporate activity that was delayed ahead of the election is expected in the next few weeks.

Only a few days ago chemicals group ICI announced a multi-billion pound purchase of businesses from Unilever.

The merger, which puts a value of about £22 billion on the combined group and comes 18 months after drinks advertising returned to television, means GMG Brands will have the firepower from the marketing spend of both groups.

But Guinness faces opposition to the deal from its leading shareholder, LVMH, the French luxury goods maker, which speaks for 14 per cent of Guinness.

George Bull, the chairman of GrandMet, said the worldwide spirits business, which is growing very slowly, needed rationalisation.

But very few of the leading players were prepared to consider merging in an attempt to reduce capacity and improve selling prices. The merger came about nine months after it emerged that Guinness was looking for a collaborative deal and at a time when the share prices of GrandMet and Guinness meant shareholders in both companies stood to realise equal benefits.

It is understood that GrandMet looked at the idea of bidding for Allied Domecq, the weakest of the world's big drinks groups, but was put off by the unattractive financial repercussions. Allied is attempting to sell its Carlsberg Tetley beer making division but needs, like Guinness and Grand Met, to secure a larger partnership to improve its global distribution.

GMG Brands should be able to stand up more forcefully against the powerful supermarket companies in Britain, such as Sainsbury, and the United States, which have undermined their attempt to impose top prices. The merger will also allow both companies to market their produce in developing countries such as Latin America and Asia more effectively. Guinness and GrandMet believe they will be able to save some £175 million a year in operating costs after about three years.

French firm vows to wreck merger, City, page 11; Letters, page 9; Pass notes, G2, page 3

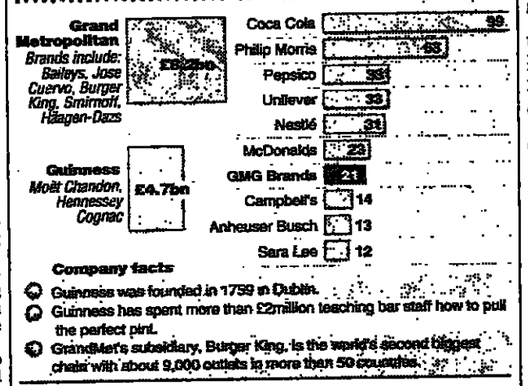
How they line-up

Turnover

Grand Metropolitan — Brands include: Baileys, Jose Cuervo, Burger King, Smirnoff, Häagen-Dazs — £9.25bn

Guinness — Moët Chandon, Hennessey Cognac — £4.7bn

Top ten global food and drink companies, £bn



Company facts

- Guinness was founded in 1759 in Dublin.
- Guinness has spent more than £2million teaching bar staff how to pull the perfect pint.
- GrandMet's subsidiary, Burger King, is the world's second biggest chain with about 9,000 outlets in more than 50 countries.

Straw allows Nepalese man to stay

Kamal Ahmed

THE Nepalese orphan adopted by a British millionaire after a pact made in the Himalayas, will be allowed to stay in Britain, after Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, last night overturned a decision by his predecessor to deport him.

In one of the first moves in his new post, Mr Straw used his powers of discretion to allow Jay Khadka, now aged 21, exceptional leave to remain.

His predecessor, Michael Howard, had said that Mr Khadka should be deported, despite a recommendation by the Immigration Advisory Tribunal.

Immigrant support groups welcomed Mr Straw's decision.

In a statement, Mr Straw said he accepted the tribunal's decision that "there is not the slightest danger that Mr Khadka would ever become a burden on public funds". Mr Khadka "appears a young man of promise and it would be regrettable if that promise were to be fundamentally affected," he said.

A Home Office spokeswoman said arrangements were now being made to "regularise" Mr Khadka's position in Britain. He was brought to this country by Richard Morley, a millionaire businessman who runs a Gloucestershire computer firm and hotel.

Mr Morley's life had been saved by Mr Khadka's father after he fell ill on a mountaineering trip in the Himalayas. Mr Morley brought the boy to Britain from Nepal in 1990 after making a "debt of honour" with his dying father to look after him.

Mr Howard claimed that allowing Mr Khadka to stay would undermine government policy to "severely restrict" the numbers of immigrants.

Jay Khadka...granted exceptional leave to stay

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Cannes sketch

Coppola and the big shoe shuffle

Dan Glaister

WALK along the Quai Albert Edouard in Cannes and it soon becomes apparent that there is a strict hierarchy in force, as there is at all times during the festival. The first boat moored on the quay, of the glass-bottomed variety, offers a voyage *sous-marine*, a round trip for 70 francs. It is not a large boat. Neither are the boats moored immediately after it. But 50 yards further on, yachts replace mere boats as the dominant marine lifeform. After 100 yards, some truly monstruous yacht species can be observed — hotels on water. Then there is the Soho House yacht, only a discreet awning advertising the presence of the place where the London media crew meet to do their stuff.

But Francis Ford Coppola and Kodak wanted us to keep walking even further up the quay. Two yachts from the end, we found Juliet. Juliet is worth $35 million and costs $2 million a year to keep in pristine condition.

Juliet, or to give her full name, the Sailing Yacht Juliet, had requested our presence at a reception. What exactly the reception was for no one was quite sure. But who wants to bother with little details like motive when there is a chance to join in the Cannes game of pretending to be one of the rich and famous.

Any illusions were quickly shattered. "You'll have to take your shoes off," a friendly but firm figure informed us as we hopped off the gangplank. The owner, who had lent the boat for the afternoon, was worried about the impact of so many feet on the teak deck. Not even Coppola, twice winner of the Palme d'Or, was exempt.

To arrive at a posh party and be told that it is socks-only induces a moment of abject terror. Which socks had gone on that morning? Were they clean? Did they have holes in them? Silly designs? Luckily they were none of those things, and we were able to mingle and stare out at the people on the quayside staring in at us.

Actually, they weren't staring in at us at all. The small crowd gathered behind a barrier was more interested in events on the very end boat on the quay, where the stars of the American television series Melrose Place were having a rival party.

There was nothing for it but to shed shoes and try some of Mr Coppola's wine, flown in for the occasion. The white was fruity, but the red, a 1992 Cabernet Sauvignon was something special. Thick, rounded and robust, rather like its creator.

Coppola was in quiet, pensive mood, unlike his clothing. While all around him were clad in black tie or "smart casual", Coppola was wearing white trousers and a shirt that should most charitably be described as colourful.

He installed himself in a sofa on one of the lower decks and talked about his wine, produced on his estate in the ultra-exclusive Napa Valley in north California's Marin County.

Around him deals were being struck and careers made — or ruined — as producers gave their business cards to film buyers and buyers gave their cards to producers. Forget the Croisette and the film competition, this is the real Cannes.

A glamorous assistant appeared bearing a pair of enormous, scruffy black trainers. "Big shoes," someone said. "Big man," she answered. Francis — I think we were supposed to call him Francis — emerged from below deck and attempted to talk and put his shoes on at the same time. This was a mistake. The big man hopped around with one foot in his hand, careering around the deck, before he finally came to rest against the relative stability of a handrail and was able to lever his oversize foot into his oversize shoe. Then he was off, down the gangplank and away to the next function.

We stood around looking at each other. The owner of the boat, someone said, was a shoe magnate. We put our shoes back on and trooped back up the quayside.

Cannes review

Haunting, leaden but a brave effort

Jonathan Romney

The Brave
Cannes Film Festival

IF YOU'RE a famous actor directing your first feature, you can do one of two things. You can perch discreetly behind the camera, like Gary Oldman, and give your less starry cast some overdue *spotlight*. Or, if you're Johnny Depp, who also has his first feature in competition at Cannes, you can simmer away at centre stage, and let yourself be upstaged only by the occasional sunset.

That said, The Brave isn't the most narcissistic film a director has ever made starring himself. Unlike Kevin Costner and Mel Gibson, say, Depp is at least interested in creating a whole idiosyncratic world in his film. He just happens to be its most prominent landmark.

Advance word on The Brave led us to expect some sort of realist exposé of the snuff-movie underworld. In fact, it's more like a nightmare Western tableau inflected by metaphysics and mysticism — with echoes of Sam Shepard, David Lynch and Dennis Hopper's quixotic late '60s freak-out epic, The Last Movie.

Depp plays Raphael, a young native American living in a shanty town going to rack and ruin. There's only one hope for his wife and children, and that's to sell himself to be tortured and killed, for purposes more allegorical than mere snuff.

In an extraordinarily creepy opening sequence, he arrives at a deserted warehouse, gets interviewed by a sneering hireling (Marshall Bell, memorably vile) and is finally ushered to a subterranean chamber where an electric chair awaits him. Enter Marlon Brando in a wheelchair, puffing on a mouth organ, and things go mildly off the rails.

The rest of the film, though, ambles away on its own wayward, sometimes compelling course. In one of the nuttier scenes, Depp, with a few dollars in his pocket and fewer days to live, surprises his family by building a vast funfair in the middle of the night. It's a cue for some rambling tracking-shot vistas clearly influenced by Emir Kusturica, who directed Depp in Arizona Dream.

In one of the more Lynchian moments, Depp is confronted in the desert by Bell, who promptly plunges a pickaxe into his hand — a cue for some heavy Jesus symbolism. The whole is laced with an ominous folky soundtrack by Iggy Pop — also glimpsed in a striking split-second cameo as "Man Eating Goat".

There's a lot wrong with The Brave, with a pace that may be intended to evoke desert languor, but is often plain leaden. Yet The Brave is oddly haunting, if only for its eccentricity. It got a round of hearty boos at the press screening, and one US critic called it "every morbid, sensitive high-school kid's dream movie".

That sums it up pretty well, but Depp — who co-wrote it with his brother D P Depp — comes across as wanting to create his own cinematic style.

Cannes catcalls notwithstanding, he should be encouraged to give directing another go.

Private schools to 'build bridges' with new Labour

John Carvel
Education Editor

HEAD teachers of the independent schools yesterday suspended their hostility to Labour and promised to share facilities with children from state comprehensives, as ministers have requested.

After running advertisements against Labour education policy during the election campaign, the private schools said they wanted to build bridges with the government.

Independent schools had "felt very threatened indeed" by changes of government in the past, said Nick Bevan, headmaster of Shiplake College in Oxfordshire and chairman of the Society of Headmasters and Headmistresses of Independent Schools.

Foreign Secretary's 'mission statement' pledges human rights will form core of international policy

Cook gives ethics priority

Ian Black
Diplomatic Editor

ROBIN COOK, the new Foreign Secretary, yesterday committed the Government to "put human rights at the heart of our foreign policy".

Labour's overseas strategy is to have an "ethical dimension" that includes a "responsible" arms trade, pressure on Nigeria to democratise and publication of an annual human rights report, he said.

Outlining ambitious priorities in an unprecedented "mission statement", Mr Cook promised a proactive approach to Europe "while resolutely defending British interests", more concern for the environment and greater efforts on trade promotion.

But it was the emphasis on ethics and human rights that was most striking in his high-profile presentation and an accompanying media offensive designed to maintain the post-election momentum.

"The Labour Government does not accept that political values can be left behind when we check in our passports to travel on diplomatic business," he declared.

His address, in the Foreign Office's ornate Locarno Room, was preceded by pounding music and a slick video, proclaiming "Tomorrow's Britain Leading the World". Images of a triumphant Tony Blair outside Downing Street and a collage of scenes from British industry, the arts, defence and technology underlined the message that "in the modern world, foreign policy is not divorced from domestic policy".

Flanked by his junior ministers, and with the head of the diplomatic service, Sir John Coles, looking on, Mr Cook declared: "Our foreign policy must have an ethical dimension and must support the demands of other peoples for the democratic rights on which we insist for ourselves. "The Labour Government will put human rights at the heart of our foreign policy."

Britain, as one of the world's four leading defence exporters, would seek responsible international regulation of the arms trade through an eight-point plan Labour produced in opposition, he said.

"In particular, we are going to press for a European Union code of conduct to make sure that if we say 'No, this export is wrong', no other European company then takes up that contract," he told the BBC.

Mr Cook stayed doggedly away from saying whether bans would be imposed on specific countries like Indonesia or the Gulf states. Officials said later that it would take time to "put flesh on the bones" of the new policy outline.

Labour is pledged not to issue licences for arms sales to regimes "that might use them for repression or international aggression". It was unclear whether the Government would act unilaterally if other countries failed to agree.

Pledging efforts to rebuild the Commonwealth's status, but conspicuously ignoring the lack of international consensus on the single most difficult issue facing it — Nigeria — Mr Cook said: "We believe that the world must keep up very strong pressure, and must be prepared to use economic sanctions in Nigeria, until there is a return to democratic governance."

Mr Blair and fellow Commonwealth heads of government meet in Edinburgh in October, faced with a decision over whether to expel Nigeria, suspended from the organisation after outrage over the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others.

Mr Cook stuck to the line that it was unlikely that Britain would join the first wave of a single European currency. And he insisted that good relations with the United States were a high priority, despite the lack of any specific reference to it in his mission statement.

"I strongly believe that Britain will be a more valuable and a more valued ally of America if we do actually emerge as a leading partner within Europe," the Foreign Secretary told the assembled media. "A Britain which does not have influence in Europe will be of less interest to Washington."

Aides say Mr Cook is anxious to think strategically and beyond a year in which the diplomatic diary is already bristling with important dates: these include next month's EU Amsterdam summit, the Hong Kong handover, July's Madrid summit on Nato expansion and the Commonwealth summit.

In January 1998, Britain assumes the six-month rotating EU presidency and hosts the Asia-Europe summit in London, the G7 summit in Birmingham and the Cardiff EU summit in June.

"This cluster of opportunities for Britain to provide leadership will make the next year a uniquely exciting and rewarding period," he said.

Leader comment, page 8; Hugo Young, page 9

Carol Barclay in victorious mood outside the Court of Appeal PHOTOGRAPH: MARK ST GEORGE

Jailed women jurors cleared of contempt

Owen Bowcott

TWO women jurors jailed for refusing to reach a verdict were yesterday cleared by the Court of Appeal because they were sentenced by a judge who had exhibited an "element of bias" and anger.

Judge Anura Cooray, who provoked a public uproar by jailing Bonnie Schot and Carol Barclay for 30 days, should never have presided at the contempt case against them, three senior colleagues ruled yesterday.

Clearing both women of contempt of court, Lord Justice Rose, sitting with Mr Justice Forbes and Mr Justice Keene, said the case should have been handed to another senior crown court judge or the Attorney General.

It was "not appropriate" to send Ms Schot, aged 20, of Clapham Junction, south London, the jury foreman, and Ms Barclay, 32, of Shepherd's Bush, west London, to prison.

No juror had previously being jailed for contempt, Lord Justice Rose said. "It seems very doubtful whether any member of the public would have contemplated such a possibility before this case."

The unprecedented legal dilemma arose at Knightsbridge crown court on March 24. A 17-day counterfeit currency case against five defendants had to be abandoned and a retrial ordered after the two women cited "personal reasons" for not returning a verdict.

Ms Schot, who is planning to study law, claimed that there was not enough evidence for her to reach a decision. Ms Barclay explained that she felt unable to judge other people.

Bonnie Schot: not enough evidence for a decision

After a night in prison, the pair were freed on bail the following day, pending the appeal, but Judge Cooray insisted that jurors had to recognise their responsibilities if the criminal justice system was to be effective.

Lord Justice Rose expressed sympathy with Judge Cooray for having to deal with a "very unusual situation". Jurors should run the risk of punishment — even imprisonment — if they failed, he said, to act in accordance with their oath to "faithfully try the defendant and give a true verdict according to the evidence". Trial by jury is a "cornerstone of our democracy".

Jury service could involve difficult challenges to the mind and emotions over a considerable period and unpalatable decisions might have to be made. But without it "civilised society as we know it would not survive", he said.

Judge Cooray should probably not have sought written clarification of the initial note handed to him by the jury which read: "We are unable to come to any decisions owing to some jurors' conscious (sic) beliefs. Please advise."

He certainly ought not to have asked for the names of the jurors concerned, the Court of Appeal ruled. It was in breach of the Contempt of Court Act, which applied to judges as much as anyone else.

Consideration should be given in future cases to making it clear that judges had a discretion to excuse jurors for other reasons, such as conscientious objection.

After yesterday's hearing, Ms Barclay, a nursery nurse, admitting that it had been "a stressful time", said: "The Court of Appeal has found that Judge Cooray made a number of serious errors and he himself committed contempt of court.

"I was wrongly charged, wrongly tried and wrongly sentenced. Especially serious was his locking me up without any warning, which the Court of Appeal said was without any legal principle.

"It is a disgrace that this should ever have happened. It casts a shadow over jurors whereas it should spotlight the judge's shortcomings."

Ms Schot, who wants to be a solicitor, said she had tried to carry out her task as a juror to the best of her ability.

"I am extremely relieved it has come to an end. I still want to be a solicitor. This experience has not put me off."

ANC apologises but defends conduct of 'just war'

David Beresford
in Johannesburg

THE African National Congress yesterday defended its moral conduct of a "just war" against apartheid while admitting to the torture and execution of dissidents and spies and the widespread sexual abuse of female cadres in guerrilla training camps.

It disclosed it had plotted the murder of the Inkatha leader, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, but said the conspiracy had been overruled by the leadership. It confessed to having killed civilians in urban bomb attacks, but blamed technical blunders for the extent of the deaths.

"We have nothing to hide," Nelson Mandela's heir-apparent, the deputy president Thabo Mbeki, told Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Cape Town.

The ANC said 22 of its members had been executed in the camps in exile for offences including mutiny, betrayal, rape and murder.

"As a recipient of [state] torture in 1964, I could never justify the use of torture," the transport minister, Mac Maharaj, told the commission. The man responsible for the camps — security department head Mzwai Piliso — had been sacked and the national commissar, Andrew Masondo, had been censured.

The defence minister, Joe Modise, ackowledged that women combatants had been sexually harassed and abused. "The ANC took steps to correct this, it was a very serious problem," he said.

But challenged as to why ANC personnel implicated in the camps' scandal were subsequently given senior government positions, the ANC said: "To continue punishing these officials endlessly would be contrary to humane practice."

On the ANC's feud with Inkatha, in which about 15,000 people died in the decade from 1985, Mr Mbeki said his party had taken only defensive action, "not against Inkatha but against warlords" paid by the apartheid government to foment conflict.

The movement said its most lethal bomb blast — which killed 19 people outside the air force headquarters in central Pretoria in 1983 — had been in retaliation for a South African raid into Lesotho which had killed 42 of its supporters. The bomb exploded prematurely, killing the two guerrillas who had planted it and 11 military personnel.

Some of its recruits had a "sketchy political understanding of the nature of the struggle", it said, referring to a number of bombs which had killed civilians. "Some were never thoroughly under the discipline of the ANC."

"We regret the deaths and injuries to civilians. We apologise to the next-of-kin for the suffering and hurt."

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Ian Spiro was found dead in his car in the Californian desert. His wife and children were shot dead in their beds and his bloody fingerprint was found nearby. But were the deaths linked to Middle East terrorists through Terry Waite and the Beirut hostages? **Richard Norton-Taylor** reports

Gail and Ian Spiro . . . her mother, Marjorie Brunskill (above left), refuses to believe that he killed her and their children

Spy's death 'was murder'

Family rejects inquest verdict

THE family of a British spy claimed yesterday that he was murdered because of his role in the Middle East hostage crisis and rejected the verdict of a coroner's inquest into the death of his wife and children.

Ian Spiro, an agent for MI6 and the CIA, was discovered dead with cyanide poisoning in his car in the Californian desert in November 1992. His wife, Gail, aged 42, and her three children — Dina, 10, Adam, 14, and Sara, 16 — were found dead, with gunshot wounds to their heads at their ranch near San Diego.

John Taylor, coroner for West Cumbria, yesterday said Mr Spiro's wife and children died from unlawful killing. He based his verdict on a report by the San Diego police which found that Mr Spiro and his wife had run up debts of $5 million (£3 million).

However, Marjorie Brunskill, Gail Spiro's mother, claimed in a written statement that Mr Spiro was killed after his involvement with Terry Waite in Lebanese hostage negotiations may have become known to Middle East terrorists.

Mrs Brunskill, who said her son-in-law was "an unscrupulous businessman but incapable of such an inhuman act", has refused to accept the US police version of events. "We believe that Ian was murdered by some terrorist group originating from the Middle East or under the direction of the CIA," she said.

The inquest was delayed after the San Diego sheriff's department rejected a Foreign Office request for copies of medical reports into the deaths. At an earlier hearing, Kenneth Quarton, Gail Spiro's half-brother who lives in Toronto, Canada, claimed Mr Spiro feared for his life because Mr Waite had revealed his name in connection with the Beirut hostage crisis.

The court took written evidence from Mr Waite and Eugene Douglas, President Reagan's roving ambassador who admitted to Mr Spiro's shadowy connections with the Archbishop of Canterbury's former envoy, first revealed in a book by a BBC reporter, Gavin Hewitt.

Mr Douglas said that after Mr Spiro's death, he told the FBI that "Spiro had a part in the release of Terry Waite ... He had strong links with the Shi'ites, that is how he was brought to the attention of the CIA and to Oliver North". Mr Spiro, he added, was also run by Kamil Cowrie, a London-based Lebanese Christian.

The hearing heard how Mr Spiro featured in a book by Mr Hewitt, called "Terry Waite, Why was he kidnapped?" In a letter to the coroner, Mr Hewitt said Mr Spiro "was rather proud of his mention in the book".

In another statement read by the coroner, Mr Waite denied he had implicated Mr Spiro. Mr Waite, who was himself taken hostage in January 1987 and released in November 1991, said he "supplied no information whatsoever to Gavin Hewitt on Mr Ian Spiro or any other informant".

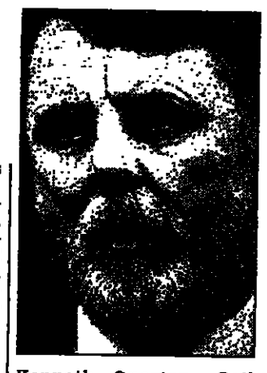
A 1995 San Diego police department report, which re-examined the affair, found that Mr Spiro and his wife owed $5 million to banks, credit card companies and individuals. It also said that Mr Spiro had tried to use a Ouija board to help him win the California lottery and that a book called Final Exit, on the best methods of suicide, was found in his car. Tapes found near his body recorded his belief in "dark forces".

Mrs Spiro and her children were shot twice each at close range in their beds with a .357 Smith & Wesson revolver which had been loaned to Mr Spiro by a lawyer friend, the sheriff's department found.

Blood on a bathrobe worn by Mr Spiro came from his youngest daughter Dina and his bloody fingerprint was found on the door to her room.

"It is evident that Ian Spiro killed his family and then committed suicide. Case closed. Suspect deceased," the US police report concluded.

Mr Spiro was cremated in America and no coroner's inquest will be heard in Britain.



Terry Waite (left) denies implicating Ian Spiro in efforts to save Beirut hostages – operations which involved Oliver North (right) and the CIA. But Gail Spiro's mother believes the links ended in the death of the Spiro family

Clarke tells of fears if Tories lurch to hard right

Michael White, Ewan MacAskill and Martin Kettle

KENNETH Clarke last night made his formal pitch for the Tory leadership with a warning to his party that a lurch to the "hardline nationalist and anti-European" right would render it as unelectable against Tony Blair as Michael Foot was against Margaret Thatcher.

But the former chancellor, who is confirmed as the public's frontrunner in today's Guardian/ICM poll, sweetens the pill for his rightwing critics by proclaiming himself a free market anti-federalist who drove through controversial reforms in education and the NHS against Whitehall resistance.

That toughness and experience will enable him to take on a government which he accuses of "already acting with the arrogance and impatience of a party with too big a majority", in a letter to the 161 Tories at Westminster.

"When Blair betrays their trust many of the moderate voters who have left us could turn to the Liberal Democrats if they believe the Conservatives have migrated to the hard right of politics," he said. He insisted every decision the Tories make must be dictated by the need to defeat Mr Blair in 2002 — not after the two terms he seeks.

The Guardian's ICM opinion poll showed that none of the six Tory leadership candidates has managed to excite great enthusiasm among the public, who do not have a vote in the MPs-only election, but that Mr Clarke is the least unpopular.

ICM asked voters over the weekend which candidate they would like to be the Tory leader. Top was "none of them" with 27 per cent, followed by "don't knows" on 19. Mr Clarke had 18 per cent support, with John Redwood second on 13 per cent. They are regarded by rivals as the unelectable "extremes". The bookies' favourite, the centre-right compromise candidate, William Hague, is third on 11 per cent.

Michael Howard attracted only 6 per cent support among voters, Stephen Dorrell had 4 per cent, and Peter Lilley 3 per cent.

After a frantic week in which Mr Clarke's five rivals had formally declared their ambitions and made most of the running, centre-left Tory MPs were relieved their champion had finally made his move as Mr Howard, the right's toughest alternative, announced private meetings with MPs to shore up his position after his integrity was challenged by his former junior, Ann Widdecombe, a Lilley supporter.

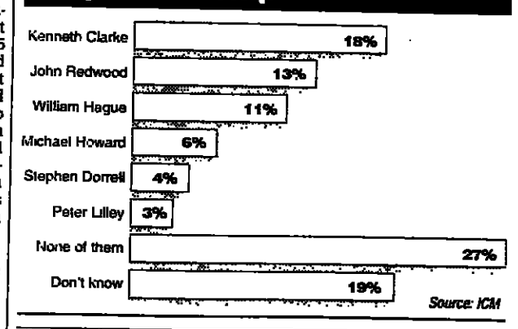
One of Mr Howard's team said: "We have rolled with the punches and we have come out fighting." He described it as a compliment that a "Stop Howard" campaign had — allegedly — been organised.

ICM's findings will encourage Mr Clarke. Among the young voters whom the Tories must woo, his lead is even greater than among the population as a whole. His letter contained one conciliatory passage on Europe. "I am against any further transfer of competence to the EU or any weakening of our veto. I have always argued in favour of flexible labour markets and against European social legislation and the social chapter." It is as close to an olive branch as the right is likely to get from him.

ICM interviewed a random sample of 961 adults by telephone between May9 and 11. The results have been weighted to be representative of all adults.

Grassroots plea, page 5

Tory leadership



Woman braves sharks and Santa to swim from Cuba to Florida

Alex Duval Smith in Washington

AN Australian woman yesterday braved sharks, currents and hallucinations about Father Christmas to become the first person officially to swim from Cuba to Florida.

Susie Maroney, aged 22, swam the 120-mile Florida Straits in under 25 hours, protected by an open-topped shark cage attached to a motorboat equipped with satellite navigation.

It was her second attempt: last June she was plucked from stormy waters 12 miles from the Florida Keys after she began vomiting and imagining that Father Christmas and a troop of monkeys were in the shark cage.

Maroney, Australia's top marathon swimmer, left Havana at 11.46am on Sunday, arriving at Key West, Florida, at 12.25pm yesterday. Hers was the 51st official attempt to swim the straits.

Connie Pignatiello, a spokeswoman for the venture, said a pontoon on Maroney's 28ft by 8ft cage had been damaged by sharks during the night. "We had feared the cage would sink, but we were scared to let her out because it was rough and we had seen sharks" including a 10ft hammerhead.

Maroney's swim had been expected to take around 40 hours, but was considerably shortened thanks to equipment aboard the lead boat which charted the currents in the straits. She did not have access to such equipment last June when she aborted her swim after 38 hours and 30 minutes.

During the crossing, she rested every hour, treading water, and took high-protein rehydrating drinks. Every five hours, she was fed chopped bananas, chocolate milk and high-protein biscuits.

City predator pays £1m compensation to Co-op

Tony May

CITY predator Andrew Regan and his associates have paid the Co-operative Wholesale Society a "substantial sum" — said to be close to £1 million — following the collapse of their hostile £1.2 billion bid for the company.

While the payment settles a Co-op claim for civil damages, Mr Regan still faces a private prosecution. He also stands to lose much of his fortune when stock market dealings in Lanica, his master company, are resumed this week. The shares, which rose to £20 each before they were suspended by the Stock Exchange, may fall below £1.

The planned Co-op bid collapsed last month after the ethics of Mr Regan were described by a High Court judge as "clearly dishonest".

The Co-op said yesterday that it had ended its civil legal action for damages against Mr Regan, his two companies Lanica Trust and Galileo, former Co-op manager Allan Green, and Mr Regan's adviser David Lyons.

But this, it added, did not affect its private criminal prosecution against Mr Regan, Mr Lyons and Mr Green over the alleged theft of CWS documents. The first hearing in this case is to take place on May 28.

The CWS is prosecuting Mr Regan and Mr Lyons for allegedly aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring theft and handling stolen property. It is taking action against Mr Green for alleged theft.

The Co-op has already accepted a "substantial financial settlement" — again said to be £1 million — from merchant bank Hambros and Travers Smith Braithwaite, a City law firm, who advised Mr Regan on the bid. Both companies apologised to the Co-op last month.

The Co-op said it remained interested in the outcome of investigation by the Serious Fraud Office into the circumstances of an earlier deal between the Co-op and Hobson, a business once owned by the Co-op but then controlled by Mr Regan.

The focus of the investigation is a £2.4 million payment made by the CWS to a company called Trellis International. The payment is thought to be connected to a renegotiation of a 1994 contract to supply food manufactured by Hobson.

● Fugitive millionaire Asil Nadir is to start a court action against the Serious Fraud Office, accusing it of abusing the legal process. On tonight's Cook Report programme on ITV, he will again say he is prepared to return to the UK from northern Cyprus to clear his name.

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Maharishi Foundation sale of £15m base prompts property agent to declare: 'There are more people with that kind of money than you would think. We are talking seriously rich'

Grade I listed Mentmore Towers (above), with five state rooms like that below, is set to make its charity owners a £14.75 million profit PHOTOGRAPHS: SEAN SMITH

Yogic flyers hoping for a windfall profit

Gary Younge

THE charity associated with the Natural Law Party is set to make a £14.75 million profit through the sale of its headquarters, it emerged yesterday.

The Maharishi Foundation bought Mentmore Towers, a listed Grade I building in Buckinghamshire, and 81 surrounding acres for £232,000 in 1978 and has put it on the market at a guide price of between £10-£15 million.

"There are more people with that kind of money than you would think. We are talking seriously rich, private jet material. Some live in Britain but they would be looking at the Far East, Middle East and America for buyers as well," a property consultant said.

"It is rare for a property of this calibre to be offered on the market," said Ian Stewart, director for international property consultant Savills, agents for the sale.

Over the last 19 years the foundation has been using the house, which includes five state and major reception rooms and a total of 50 bedrooms, as a centre for teaching transcendental meditation and yogic flying under the guidance of their guru, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. The foundation has also made considerable money hiring out its grounds for films, including Rebecca and Brazil, TV programmes (Inspector Morse and Chef) and advertisements (Ferrero Rocher and HP Sauce) as well as business conferences.

The foundation denied accusations that they were selling the property to subsidise the Natural Law Party, which lost all its deposits in the general election. It insisted that while both it and the party shared similar philosophies they were financially completely separate.

The party's most famous supporter is the former Beatle George Harrison, who the foundation insist has had nothing to do with either the purchase or sale of Mentmore Towers. He staged a fund-raising concert for the party at the Royal Albert Hall before the 1992 general election.

The foundation, which last year pledged to send international squadrons of yogic flyers around the world to focus on generating global peace and harmony, already owns a former US airforce base in Suffolk and several other centres in the South-east.

Chairman of the foundation's trustees Geoffrey Clements, who is also the leader of the Natural Law Party, said the charity was selling Mentmore to create a purpose-built centre so it could expand its operations. The foundation also runs degree courses in business and management.

Organisers are looking for somewhere in the Home Counties, but said they had not yet found a suitable place.

Mentmore Towers was built for Baron Meyer Amschel de Rothschild in 1855 and designed by Sir Joseph Paxton, designer of the Crystal Palace.

In 1974 the 7th Earl of Rosebery, Neil Archibald Primrose, offered the house's contents to a Labour government in lieu of £3 million in death duties he could not pay. The government turned him down and so he sold off the contents for £6 million in what became known as the sale of the century.

George Harrison (right) in his time as a Beatle, with the Indian guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

Benn 'outraged' by attack story

Stuart Millar

NIGEL Benn, the former super-middleweight world boxing champion, yesterday dismissed as "outrageous" allegations that he had behaved like a maniac and assaulted a former friend he had once treated "like a brother".

Benn, aged 33, told Middlesex Guildhall crown court, central London, that he had no knowledge of the incident at the Legends nightclub in Mayfair, in the West End of London, in which the prosecution alleges he attacked Ray Sullivan, a ticket agency chief, with an ashtray, leaving him scarred for life and needing 105 stitches in his nose.

Nicknamed the Dark Destroyer, Mr Benn said his fists had once been insured for £10 million. He denies wounding Mr Sullivan with intent to cause grievous bodily harm and unlawful wounding.

He had gone to the nightclub on September 28 last year with a friend to celebrate the birth that afternoon of his twins. He and his fiance, Caroline Jackson, had been through three years of IVF treatment, making the birth even more special.

He had seen Mr Sullivan there but, as on previous occasions, they had not exchanged a word because they had fallen out three years earlier over Mr Sullivan's involvement in drugs.

About 30 minutes after he arrived, a scuffle had broken out about 15 to 20ft away and he and his friend had decided to leave to avoid trouble. A club doorman had ushered them out.

"I just didn't want to be dragged into a scene in a club, knowing I had just had twins and I just wanted to come out and celebrate."

But Paul Dodgson, prosecuting, told him: "You have lied and lied about that night ... because you have got so much to lose by admitting it." Mr Benn: "I am sad to be here, and I am glad to be here. Glad to defend my name. To stand up here and tell the people, you lot, how it really is, people slandering my good name. I have worked 15 years to get my name where it is. I am not going to let someone ruin my name."

He had not spoken to or made eye contact with Mr Sullivan that night. Mr Dodgson: "The emotional state you were in, something snapped that night."

Mr Benn: "Nothing snapped. I had no reason to snap. I was on one of the happiest days of my life and I have already seen Ray all over the place and you say all of a sudden on the day my babies are born I turned into a maniac."

After leaving Legends, Mr Benn and his friend had driven to another club, the Ministry of Sound in south London, where they had stayed for two hours until a bouncer informed them that somebody had smashed into Mr Benn's Mercedes.

He had immediately called the police. He dismissed evidence from the policewoman who attended that his right hand had been bandaged and bleeding as a "total lie".

The case continues.

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Fig. 11. The water-lily fold for table napkins.

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What is the point of picking medical quarrels with a woman who thinks that angioplasty is the woman who sang the Irish entry in last year's Eurovision?
Diary of a hypochondriac
G2 page 13

News in brief

Chainsaw woman sentenced

A 20-YEAR-OLD woman who battered her ex-lover to death and then cut up his body with a chainsaw was yesterday sent to a young offenders' institution for five years after being cleared of murder but found guilty of manslaughter by reason of provocation.

Preston crown court had heard that Nicola Grogan killed Stephen Clarke, aged 35, in her flat in Blackburn after he tried to rape her. She hit him more than 12 times with a large hammer before stabbing him in the back and later tried dismembering his body with an electric chainsaw.

United's child labour denial

MANCHESTER United yesterday denied that their official footballs were being manufactured using child labour after a Christian Aid report accused the Premiership champions of selling Eric Cantona souvenir footballs in their shops for £9.99 while Indian youngsters who stitched them got just 12p a ball.

Club director and solicitor Maurice Watkins said: "The club requires undertakings from all its suppliers not to use child labour. If they are found wanting in that, their employment is terminated." The Cantona products were not United footballs and were not being sold in the club's shops.

Seals plan 'ludicrous'

A CALL by Scottish fishermen for cameras to be strapped to grey seals to prove that they are responsible for eating dwindling white fish stocks was dubbed "ludicrous" by environmental groups yesterday. The fishermen want an end to the designation as European Union conservation areas of the Monarch Isles and North Rona, where there are large and growing grey seal colonies.

For Scottish Natural Heritage, John Love said the proposals were expensive and impracticable. "There are huge problems gathering accurate data about what seals eat and really accurate information would be needed before calling for a cull."

ITV 'better for local news'

ITV yesterday reaffirmed its £200 million a year commitment to regional broadcasting after a NPO survey showed ITV was strongly favoured over the BBC for local news and programmes. Fifty-eight per cent of those polled preferred ITV for regional news, with 39 per cent choosing BBC1. Seventy-five per cent said ITV was the most effective at reflecting the views of the area, against 20 per cent for the BBC. — *Andrew Culf*

Britons in drug haul arrests

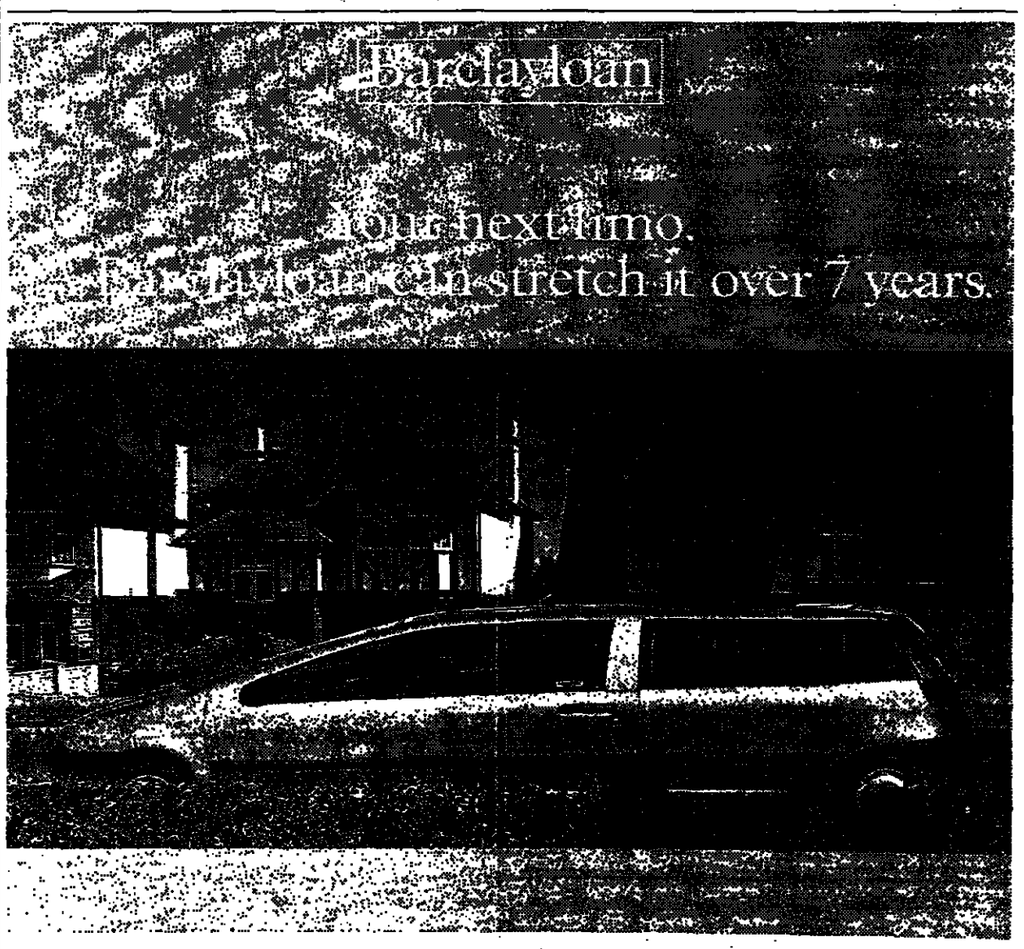
SIX Britons were being questioned by Spanish detectives yesterday after they were arrested at sea on board a converted fishing boat found to be carrying 10 tons of hashish resin worth £25 million 20 miles out to sea off the southern port of Almeria.

Search for boys called off

THE SEARCH for two missing boys feared drowned off the north Lincolnshire coast was called off yesterday. Rescue teams have scoured a 15 square mile area at the mouth of the Humber estuary which is well known for dangerous tides and treacherous marshes, but have found no sign of nine-year-old Nathan Sawyer and Ian Smye, 10. The body of a third boy, 11-year-old Christopher Scott, was found soon after they friends vanished eight days ago after leaving their homes at North Cotes near Cleethorpes for a bike ride.

Beer thief's $75 apology

A THIEF who stole 150 cans of beer from the Badger Brewery in Blandford, Dorset, 20 years ago has sent a letter of apology and a cheque for $75 (about £46.35) to pay for the goods. The man, who now lives in Los Angeles, wrote: "These cans I stole for the sole purpose of drinking but I would like to make amends for this."



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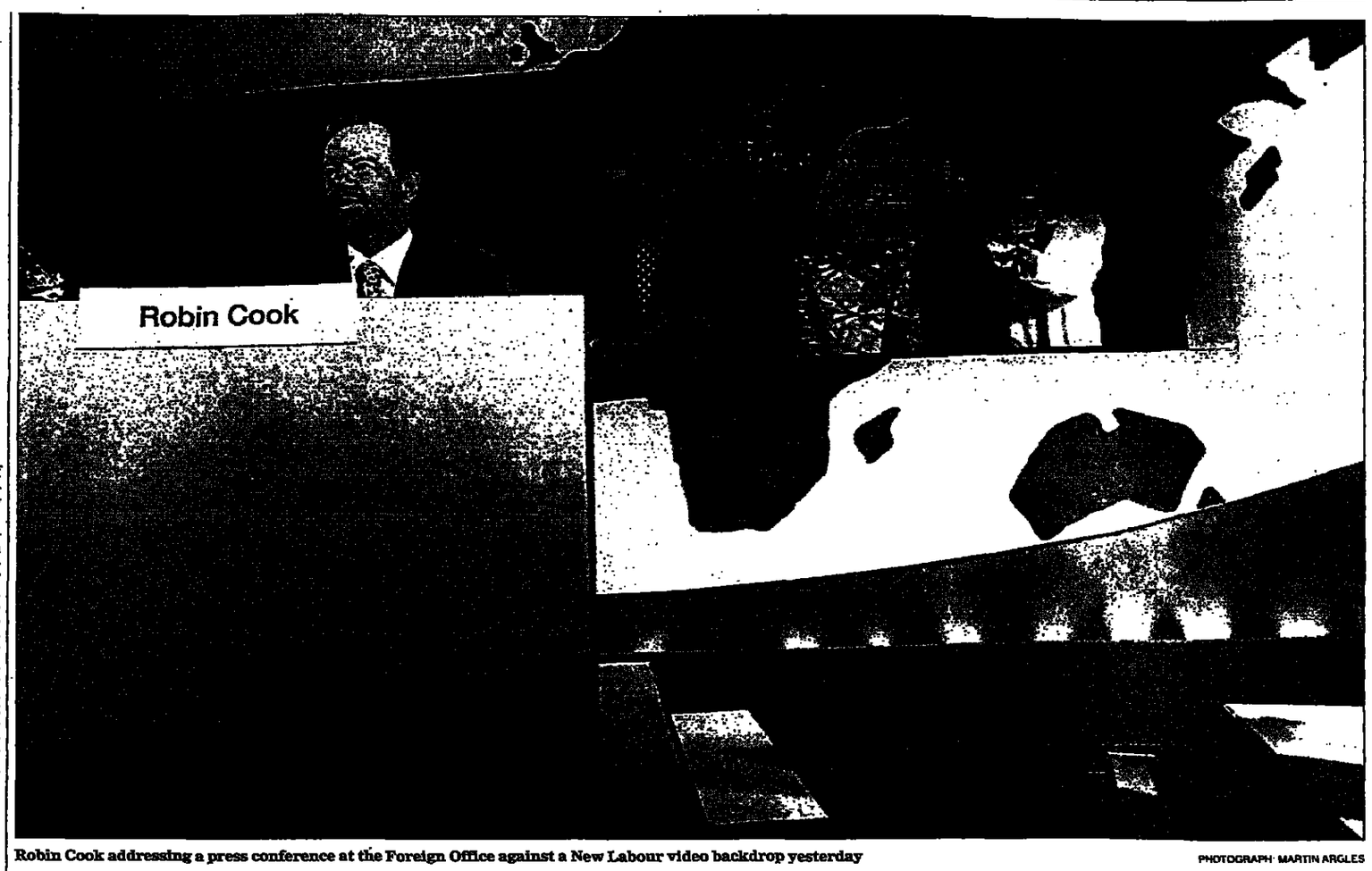
Brussels accepts Chancellor's planned VAT cut on fuel

Brown rejects EMU rule



Robin Cook addressing a press conference at the Foreign Office against a New Labour video backdrop yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

John Palmer in Brussels

THE Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, made it clear last night that Britain would not be prevented from taking part in the single European currency from its planned launch in January 1999 simply because sterling had not already rejoined the exchange rate mechanism (ERM).

Speaking after attending his first meeting of EU finance ministers in Brussels yesterday, Mr Brown rejected the hardline interpretation of the treaty about prior accession to the ERM. But he also repeated that the new government had "no plans" to join the ERM and had not decided yet whether it would be in Britain's interests to be among the first wave of countries taking part in the single currency.

'Two-year ERM membership is not a condition which has been decided'

Earlier the German finance minister, Theo Waigel, had declared that the biggest problem for Britain in being part of the single currency from January 1999 was that it would not have had two years' ERM membership. "We consider this to be necessary but it is not for me to decide," Mr Waigel said.

However, the Dutch Presidency of the European Union insisted last night that there was no clear legal case against admitting a country into monetary union without a two-year prior membership of the exchange rate mechanism. "Two years compulsory membership of the ERM is not something which has been decided," the Dutch finance minister, Gerrit Zalm, told a press conference. "Lawyers disagree about how to interpret the [Maastricht] treaty in this respect. What is important is two years of stable exchange rates and fulfilment of the other treaty criteria."

Until now most EU governments have insisted on a strict reading of the Maastricht treaty, which they claim stipulates a minimum of two years prior membership of the ERM as a condition for joining the single currency. This implies that Britain should have rejoined the ERM in January to be eligible for monetary union in January 1999. But following the election of what they see as a more pro-European government, other EU member states appear ready to take a more flexible approach.

The final decision on whether prior ERM membership is an insuperable obstacle to participation in the single currency will be taken by a special summit meeting of EU leaders, chaired by Tony Blair as President of the European Council, next May.

"I cannot believe that the ERM condition alone would prevent Britain being admitted to the single currency — if that is what the UK government and the people decide," another senior official said yesterday.

The new Chancellor also scored a second success yesterday when he won grudging Commission acceptance of the Government's plans to reduce VAT rates on domestic fuel from 8 to 5 per cent.

"I made it clear that I believe we have a watertight legal right to make the VAT reduction," Mr Brown said.

The Commissioner for the European single market, Mario Monti, said that "the cut might not be in the spirit of Community legislation" but he saw "no particular legal obstacle."

In return Mr Brown said he approved of the general approach being taken by the Commission to complete the single market and that he would support a review of EU policy on energy and other taxes. "The Chancellor did appear very open to our approach on taxation and the single market," Mr Monti said.

Bringing European rights back to Britain

Alan Travis on safeguards to liberty in the Queen's Speech

LABOUR'S detailed plans to "repatriate British rights to British courts" which will be confirmed in tomorrow's Queen's Speech are intended by ministers to "protect the individual against the misuse of power by the state".

UK citizens have been able to appeal to the European Court on Human Rights at Strasbourg for almost 50 years but many have been put off by the expense and the time it takes — on average more than six years. Yet despite these obstacles the UK has been found guilty in Strasbourg of human rights violations in more than 40 cases — three quarters of them since 1979. It is also becoming an increasingly popular legal route, with a 50 per cent rise in the number of cases ruled admissible against the British government in 1995.

The repeated defeats in Strasbourg has led to the vilification of the human rights court by Conservative MPs, who were particularly incensed by recent rulings on the SAS shooting of three IRA suspects in Gibraltar and on Michael Howard abusing his powers to determine how long juvenile murderers should stay in custody.

They also cite the Strasbourg court's 15-year-old decision to declare corporal punishment in schools illegal. Other rulings have set aside British laws on anti-terrorism, contempt and blasphemy.

As a signatory to the convention — which was actually drafted by British officials in the aftermath of the Second World War — Britain is bound to abide by the rulings of Strasbourg court. However, it has secured special permission not to implement one ruling criticising the length of time that suspects can be detained in Northern Ireland.

One reason for Britain's poor record at Strasbourg is that, with the exception of Ireland, the UK is the only signatory country to the European Convention which has not incorporated it into national law.

The decision to do so now means that individuals will be able to go to the High Court in London, Edinburgh or Belfast and argue that their human rights have been violated under the convention. It covers 14 main areas of civil and political rights including "the right to life, liberty and security of person"; the right to a fair trial; respect for private and family life; freedom of thought; the right to free expression; freedom of peaceful assembly including the right to join a trade union; the right to marry and have a family; the right to education; as well as bans on torture, slavery and retroactive criminal laws.

Labour's manifesto, however, recognises that the document is probably out of date and fails to reflect many changes in life over the past half century and so ministers promise that incorporation will "establish a floor, not a ceiling, for human rights. Parliament will remain free to enhance these rights, for example by a Freedom of Information Act."

But the Bill of Rights advocated by groups such as Charter 88 and others remains a more distant objective. Ministers will go no further than their manifesto statement that incorporating the European Convention into UK law is "the long overdue first step in this direction".

Leader comment, page 8; Hugo Young, page 9

Minister gives no sign of new move on BSE

Stephen Bates in Brussels

DR JACK Cunningham, the Agriculture Minister, visited the European Commission in Brussels to discuss the BSE crisis yesterday, but offered no new initiatives other than implementing the previous government's policies in a more amicable way.

The minister declined to forecast when the disease would be eliminated from British cattle, when Britain would be able to apply to have the worldwide export ban lifted by the European Union, or whether the Government would try to have the ban lifted in Scotland or Northern Ireland in advance of the rest of the country.

He told a press conference that a date for lifting the ban was not imminent: "We are looking at a new agenda. Quite clearly we believe a more constructive, open dialogue is going to be helpful."

He acknowledged that other member states are not inclined towards an early lifting of the ban. The junior agriculture minister, Jeff Rooker, has been placed in charge of coming up with fresh initiatives to solve the crisis.

Dr Cunningham said: "We have inherited a very difficult and complex situation and I am not going to set dates or deadlines for when this can end."

But he gave a hint of Government dissatisfaction that other member states may be exporting beef to Britain prepared to less exacting hygiene standards than have now been introduced for home produced meat.

He also promised that quota hopping — the selling of British fishing licences to overseas buyers — would also have the highest priority, though not to the extent promised by Mr Major of blocking next month's heads of government summit in Amsterdam.

Lib Dems pick holes in policies

Michael White Political Editor

THE Liberal Democrats last night fired a warning shot across Labour's bows, saying that Labour was not going far enough in its approach to constitutional reform, classroom sizes and energy policy.

It was the first exercise in "constructive criticism" since Paddy Ashdown's troops emerged from the election with a post-war record of 46 MPs in the wake of the Blairite landslide.

The Lib Dem president, Robert Maclennan, welcomed tomorrow's Queen's Speech pledges on devolution and the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law.

But he criticised the delay over a Freedom of Information Act, said that parliamentary procedure should be reformed quickly and insisted that Labour's pledge to introduce proportional representation to the European Parliament in time for the 1999 EU elections must be achieved.

"We will work with the government where we agree and where it is in the nation's interest. Automatic adversarialism is out. We will not indulge in kneejerk opposition for its own sake," said Mr Maclennan, who was a Labour minister himself in the 1970s.

In the new Ashdown team there are now so many MPs that they do not have to double up, yet everyone has a front bench job. One staying at his post, education spokesman Don Foster, was quick to complain that Labour's pledge to cut classes to 30 in the 5-7 age range was not enough. It should be 5-11, and the £100 million pledged to pay for it was not enough either, he said.

Matthew Taylor (environment) also criticised Labour for its fuel pricing policies — including the cut to 5 per cent on VAT for home fuels — as likely to undermine Britain's commitment to achieve a 20 per cent fall in co2 emissions by 2020. He also criticised as premature Labour's rejection of water metering for heavy users, and its failure to squeeze company car benefits or to support a carbon tax — long a Lib Dem favourite. Ministers will protest that they have only been in office for 10 days.

But the Lib Dems see their job as keeping up the pressure, despite Labour's watertight majority which will all but destroy their hopes of direct leverage.

The one important change in the Lib Dem line-up is Archy Kirkwood's move from chief whip to become social security and welfare spokesman.

His place could be taken by North Cornwall's MP, Paul Tyler, who has ceded lead role on farming, fishing and rural affairs to Charles Kennedy.

Big companies will face late payment penalties

Ewen MacAskill, Chief Political Correspondent

A SURPRISE bill to penalise large companies that make late payments to small businesses is to be included in tomorrow's Queen's Speech.

The commonest complaint from small businessmen, apart from bank charges, is the failure of large companies to pay up on time. Such delays, which can last months, have forced many small businesses into liquidation.

The bill will give small businessmen the right to claim interest on late payment of debts above a certain threshold. Firms will also be required to say in their annual reports how many late payments they made over the previous year, and government departments and local authorities will also be required to pay bills on time.

Labour has worked hard to show itself as sympathetic to the business world, including small firms. In a special manifesto for business published during the election campaign, Labour said: "The number of small employers has declined by half a million since 1990. Support for small businesses will have a major role in our plans for economic growth."

The manifesto also promised other help, including cutting red tape and improving support for high tech start-ups.

Conservative regional chairmen join call to give grassroots a say in leadership contest

Peter Hetherington

WIDESPREAD discontent among rank and file Conservatives over the conduct of the forthcoming leadership contest moved closer to open rebellion yesterday with the intervention of the party's regional leaders.

In an open letter to the departing hierarchy, the 12 chairmen of the area councils, along with the two national officials from Scotland and Wales, warned that a contest confined to the remaining 164 MPs would be an affront to democracy.

With the six contenders for the leadership attempting to remain aloof, it is clear the 1922 Committee of Tory backbenchers — which traditionally oversees a contest — would face an unprecedented backlash unless it agreed to involve the rank and file in the election, expected in June. The 1922 Committee will elect new officers next week.

The 12 chairmen represent the link between constituency parties and the National Union of Conservative Associations. They sit on the union's executive committee, regarded as the main grassroots sounding board. Concern is growing in Tory circles because many members feel disenfranchised with the loss of all the party's MPs in Scotland and Wales, along with the great majority in the North of England and the main cities.

In the letter the chairmen say it is no longer satisfactory that only MPs will have a vote in the leadership contest. "The result of the general election means that the next leader ... will receive not a single vote from Scotland and Wales and only one vote from the northern area and very few from our large cities."

They imply that unless rules are changed to involve a wider section of the party, a contest will only serve to widen divisions within the party.

They suggest giving the National Union the right to vote, with a modest 20 per cent representation in an electoral college. Although this would still give MPs an 80 per cent vote share, some senior officials believe it would mark an interim stage in a much wider reform process. The letter adds: "The top priority now must be to unify the party — the essential preconditon to recovery of our electoral strength. This can only be done by this modest, but symbolic proposal ... [to] include all parts of the Conservative Party in the election of our leader, rather than exclude many of them."

With Tory membership in disarray, a one-member-one-vote contest would be impossible in the short term because there is no central data base of party members — down by two-thirds since 1992 to only 250,000, according to the latest estimates. Some 600-odd constituency associations hold membership lists, some of them thought to be out of date.

Robin Hodgson, a City investment banker who chairs the National Union's executive, insisted last night that their proposal was in no way revolutionary. "We are merely asking for the right to vote in a modest way — not for the right to nominate candidates," he said.

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Curse of Bordeaux dogs Juppé

Jonathan Steele reports on the dwindling prospects of a weekend mayor

Plain-clothes police attempt to shield the French prime minister, Alain Juppé, from egg-throwing voters in Bordeaux, where he is mayor

GERTRUDE is the one they all love in Bordeaux. She's efficient, and she makes the town go round faster than it's ever done before. If she were running for election, she would sweep the board because — in the view of the inhabitants — she has done much more for them than Alain Juppé, the city's mayor who doubles as France's most unpopular prime minister for at least 20 years.

The trouble with Gertrude is that she is an acronym. The eight initial letters of a computer network, begun in 1976, stand for "Real Time Traffic Management System".

With 1,500 sensors that measure the passage of every vehicle on Bordeaux's main roads and adjust the speed at which traffic lights change, Gertrude has virtually abolished rush-hour bottlenecks.

Gertrude was already performing her miracles when Mr Juppé took over as mayor. In the two years since his arrival, his most visible feat has been to floodlight the ancient Stock Exchange and other façades beside the Garonne.

Threatened with being dumped as prime minister if the present rightwing coalition returns to power after the two rounds of elections on May 25 and June 1, Mr Juppé may not even get that far.

He would barely scrape through the second round with 52 per cent of the vote against the Socialist Gilles Savary, according to the first poll of his Bordeaux constituency at the weekend. Roughly a third of voters are still undecided.

"People had some pride in him as a young minister when he ran for mayor. Since then he's failed to make a conquest of the town," Pierre Cherruau, a local journalist, said.

French politicians can hold several jobs, and many ministers double or triple as mayors and/or county council leaders. The Socialists have promised to abolish the practice, and the RPR/UDF coalition that Mr Juppé heads has reluctantly said it will, too.

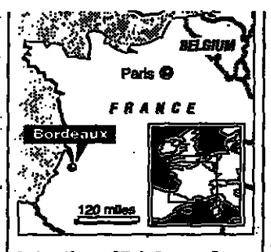
The prime minister is widely seen as a "weekend mayor" who parachuted into Bordeaux. So desperate is he to show his local patriotism that he told the city on Friday: "If the law abolishing the accumulation of offices goes through, I will draw the [right conclusion] and devote myself to being mayor."

"Let's see if the reform is passed. It would not be the first time a promise has not been kept," Mr Cherruau commented drily.

To try to mark himself as a man without ideology, Mr Juppé kicked off his campaign in La Bastide, a working-class suburb on the poor side of the Garonne, where once-thriving shipyards now stand idle.

The gesture has had mixed results. "I don't see any major change since Juppé took over. I no longer have confidence in anybody," said Claude Brustet, who runs a photocopying shop in La Bastide.

She is one of an enormous number of French voters who protest by "voting blank". They leave their ballot paper unmarked or tear it up before putting it into the official envelope. The Bordeaux poll found 27 per cent intended to do this in the first round.



Ms Brustet's husband, Patrice, feels less alienated. He split his ticket in 1995 by voting for the Socialist candidate Lionel Jospin for president, but for Mr Juppé as mayor.

"I will support someone with republican values — citizenship for all, equality of opportunity, and transparency," he said. He is willing to give Mr Juppé more time "to finish the job".

"There are many things more important than floodlighting," said an elderly woman emerging from a stationery shop. "I told Juppé when he came here that we need industries here and jobs. He just said 'Yes' and moved on. He just breezes through. We need a man who is on the spot all the time."

In the Place St Michel near the city centre, Juppé fans are equally hard to find. The Monday market of cheap clothes has a multiracial throng of vendors. When Mr Juppé came here last week for a "man-of-the-people" lunch in a busy bistro, "a crowd of about 300 gathered and started throwing eggs", the barman recalled.

"His record is negative," said Anne-Marie Karen, who runs an antique business on one side of the square. "He's delegated his authority to incompetents. He doesn't understand the issues." She particularly objected to the way the area has been swamped with men from the CRS, the national riot police, in what she sees as a futile effort to stamp out drugs. She voted for Mr Juppé in 1995 but now thinks of "voting blank".

The mayor's floodlights have helped to make Bordeaux more attractive to tourists, and this has to be a key source of income in the future, according to Mr Cherruau. Other steps have also been good, he argues. The mayor cancelled a development scheme that could have ruined a large section of the Old Town, and he backs a modern tram system to improve access from the suburbs.

For decades Jacques Chaban-Delmas, another Gaullist prime minister who preceded Mr Juppé as mayor, was France's best-known dauphin, hoping one day to be president. He failed and, with an eye on Mr Juppé, some now call it the "curse of Bordeaux".

The present prime minister also has ambitions for the Elysée. He may end up as mayor of Bordeaux for no more than a single term.

Oklahoma City bomber 'sought US uprising'

Steven Paulson in Denver

TIMOTHY McVeigh, the man accused of the Oklahoma City bombing that killed 168 people, wanted "to cause a general uprising in America" and felt justified in killing people who were part of an "evil empire", his former army friend told a court in Denver, Colorado, yesterday.

Michael Fortier, aged 28, who has pleaded guilty to knowing about the plot, said Mr McVeigh told him that he and a co-defendant, Terry Nichols, chose the Oklahoma City federal building because it was where the "orders were issued" for the government's deadly siege at Waco, Texas.

"He told me they wanted to bomb the building on the anniversary of Waco . . . to cause a general uprising in America, hopefully that would knock some people off the fence and cause them to take action," Mr Fortier told the court.

On the second anniversary of the Waco fire — April 19 1995 — a truck bomb exploded outside the Alfred P. Murrah building, in the deadliest act of terrorism on US soil.

Mr Fortier said Mr McVeigh considered all of the federal employees like "storm troopers" in the movie Star Wars. "They may be individually innocent but because they were part of the evil empire, they were guilty by association," Mr Fortier said.

As his former friend testified against him, Mr McVeigh stared straight at the witness, leaning back in his chair.

Mr Fortier said that five months before the blast, he drove with Mr McVeigh from Arizona to Kansas, and made a side trip to examine the Oklahoma City building.

He said Mr McVeigh showed him where he planned to put the truck, and an alley where he planned to park his getaway car. He said Mr McVeigh wanted to make sure there was another building between him and the blast.

Mr Fortier said he was at home with his wife, child and a neighbour when he heard about the bombing. "I was shocked at all the destruction. It was not what I was expecting to see when I turned on the television. Right away I thought, Tim did it. I thought, 'Oh my God, he did it'."

Mr Fortier acknowledged he could have stopped the bombing. "There was no excuse that I could offer why I didn't. I live with that knowledge every day."

Mr Fortier faces 23 years in prison for pleading guilty to lesser charges, including failure to report the plot, and lying to the FBI.

He began his key testimony by detailing Mr McVeigh's anti-government views, particularly that "somebody should be held accountable" for the siege at Waco, and that the "government had declared war on the American public".

"We both believed that the United Nations was actively trying to form a 'one-world government'", Mr Fortier said, including plans to "disarm the American public, take away our weapons".

> 'McVeigh said they may be individually innocent but they were all part of the evil empire'

He also spoke of Mr McVeigh's devotion to the The Turner Diaries, a racist novel about a war against the government that begins with the bombing of a federal building. Prosecutors have called it a blueprint for the Oklahoma City blast.

In the months leading up to the bombing, Mr Fortier said, Mr McVeigh sent him a letter saying he and Mr Nichols "had decided to take some positive, offensive action . . . He told me that him and Terry were thinking about blowing up a building."

He said Mr McVeigh asked him to join the plot. "I said I would never do anything like that until there was a UN tank in my front yard."

Mr McVeigh, a Gulf War veteran aged 29, could receive the death penalty if convicted of murder and conspiracy. Mr Nichols is to be tried later on the same charges. — AP.

Seven feared dead on Everest

Nick Varley

AT LEAST seven climbers are feared dead on Mount Everest after a storm engulfed the peak. Mountaineers from Germany, Kazakhstan and South Korea are among those missing.

Reports from Everest suggest the climbers were caught in a severe storm 600ft below the summit.

Last night there was also concern for the fate of three Malaysian climbers trying to become the first from their country to conquer the mountain. They were said to be camped on the southern slopes at 23,620ft, relying on oxygen tanks to breathe. Their Sherpa was reported to have died earlier.

The bulk of the feared fatalities are from a group of mainly Kazakh climbers who were descending from the summit after successfully reaching it via the north face.

Todd Burleson, leader of a rival New Zealand expedition which stayed at a base camp on the southern face, said: "We do have some news from the north side — it's not very good. The Kazakhstan party that went up . . . several of them summited but five people died on the descent."

He said a South Korean and a German were also missing. They had been with an expedition mounted by the German-based group International Mountain Climbing.

Russia's Interfax news agency named one climber who died as Alexander Toroschin, aged 45. He was with the Kazakh military expedition and apparently died while descending to a camp after failing to reach the summit last week. His colleagues Ivan Plotnikov, aged 36, and Nikolai Shevchenko, aged 52, who both reached the summit, are also missing.

The storm blew up soon after the descent began, making a search impossible and interrupting radio contact with the climbers. It also forced Mr Burleson's party to turn back to their base camp after two days climbing, at 21,000ft. His group, and other parties on the south face, are now waiting for conditions to improve.

If the deaths are confirmed, they will take the number of those who have died on Everest since 1921 to 148.

Many of the deaths have occurred in recent years as more and more expeditions — many from countries which have never conquered the summit — are organised during the two climbing seasons each year.

Last year at least 14 people died on the mountain, including eight from three expeditions caught in a blizzard.

Chechens sign 'fig-leaf' treaty

David Hearst in Moscow

TO WIDESPREAD scepticism, President Boris Yeltsin signed a four-paragraph peace treaty with the leader of separatist Chechenia, Aslan Maskhadov, claiming to be putting an end to 400 years of hostilities between their two peoples.

Mr Yeltsin, the loser of a bloody 21-month military campaign which ended in the unconditional withdrawal of his troops, called the joint declaration historic. He added, as though he had played no part in it: "Some kind of war was going on throughout this period and the people felt insecure."

Mr Maskhadov, a former Soviet colonel who led the military resistance, said the confrontation had been ended "regardless of those who wanted it to continue".

The reference was to Mr Yeltsin's interior minister, Anatoli Kulikov, who was conveniently inspecting troops in Vladivostok the day the Chechen leader was in town.

The agreement, signed in the Kremlin, bound Russia to maintain relations with Chechenia "in accordance with the generally recognised principles and norms of international law" — a phrase which caused tremors in the 88 other subjects of the Russian Federation.

While Chechenia claims independence, Russia maintains it is part of its federation. The two sides have agreed to put off consideration of the republic's status till 2001.

Mr Yeltsin's press secretary, Sergei Yastrzhembsky, quickly issued a statement claiming the phrase had more a "moral-political character than a juridical one".

In reality, commentators said, both presidents needed the joint statement as a fig-leaf for other agreements to get oil flowing through the 100-mile pipeline that runs through the rebel state.

Mr Maskhadov's authority over his Chechen field commanders has recently been challenged by two terrorist bombings of railway stations in southern Russia and a series of kidnappings of foreign and Russian journalists in Chechenia. The latest was the abduction of a three-man crew from NTV Russian.

After failing to induce Saudi Arabia and other Arab states to recognise Chechenia, Mr Maskhadov had little option but to turn to Russia for money to rebuild the republic's shattered economy. He insists that Russia must start paying pensions in the republic before the oil will flow.

Russia desperately wants the pipeline to work. It will be used to take early oil from Azerbaijan to the Russian port of Novorossiak.

Yuri Dubrovin, the legal expert of the nationalities committee of the Russia state Duma, said: "The agreement is a fig-leaf for both Chechenia and Russia. Without it Russia can't give money."

News in brief

14 North Koreans flee 'famine time bomb'

A BOAT carrying 14 North Korean asylum seekers — one of the largest groups ever to flee the hunger-stricken communist country — was intercepted off the west coast yesterday near the military demarcation line that has split the two Koreas since the 1950-53 war, the South Korean navy said.

The South Korean defence ministry said the two families on board had probably sailed straight from the North. The navy escorted their boat to the western port of Inchon last night.

A group of 17 people — all but one of them from the same family — defected from the North, through China, in December.

Meanwhile, a United Nations official with the World Food Programme (WFP) reported that some North Koreans were eating bark and leaves to stay alive.

"The situation is . . . a famine in slow motion," the official said. It's ticking away like a time bomb."

The WFP estimates that North Korea needs an additional 1.3 million tonnes of food in 1997. It has appealed for 200,000 tonnes, worth £60 million, but has received less than half that so far.

Separately, the South Korean Red Cross said it planned to ship 15,000 tonnes of maize to the North next week. — Reuter.

Chinese lake covered in dead carp

MORE than 500 tons of dead carp were found floating on a lake in central China, killed by pollution, a Chinese newspaper reported yesterday.

The dead fish covered the surface of Moshui Lake in an area three yards wide for more than a mile, the Economic Daily reported. It said the stench was overpowering.

A photograph showed a boat surrounded by dead fish packed so densely the surface of the water could not be seen.

The value of the fish killed was estimated at more than £150,000, according to a local official, who said it was caused by heavy pollution.

Moshui is one of three large lakes in Wuhan, one of China's main industrial cities.

Before the 1980s, clear water in the lake sustained many kinds of aquatic life, including soft-shelled turtles, silver carp and clams.

But as Wuhan's development speeded up under national economic reforms, the lake became a cesspool of sewage and industrial waste, the report said.

Recently, only two kinds of common carp survived in its waters.

There has been much talk about cleaning up the lake, but it was "all thunder and little rain", the report said. — Reuter.

Italy's parties claim a draw

THE opposition has taken control of Milan, Italy's second city, in the local elections, but victories by the governing the centre-left coalition in Turin and elsewhere point to a political draw.

The results of Sunday's second-round mayoral runoffs in 77 cities and towns allow all political blocs to cry victory. Despite the defeat in Milan, where a centre-right Freedom Alliance candidate won, the prime minister, Romano Prodi, said he was content with the outcome.

The vote was the first significant test of sentiment since Mr Prodi took office a year ago and a barometer of the public response to tough budgets to get Italy into shape in time for the single currency.

Milan, Italy's financial capital, was previously held by the separatist Northern League. — Reuter.

Judge halts drug evidence

A Hanoi judge yesterday stopped a defendant in Vietnam's largest-ever drugs trial from testifying that he sold raw heroin to a senior police officer, the state radio reported.

Sieng Kham Chan, from Laos, was told he could confess to police investigators in private. — AP.

Fujimori sick

The Peruvian president, Alberto Fujimori, was resting yesterday after undergoing minor surgery to his mouth at Lima's leading cancer hospital. — Reuter.

Killer's suicide

A serial killer who confessed to five murders was found dead yesterday hanging from a string of shoelaces tied to a shower-head in an Athens' maximum security prison. Dimitris Vakrinos, aged 35, said he killed his victims because they insulted him about his short stature. — AP.

Home alone

A 10-year-old girl whose mother left four months ago — on her birthday — lived alone, going to school and eating dog food in a trailer. Ashton Denice Saylor finally went to a neighbour in Sand Springs, Oklahoma. — AP.

Riot deaths

Three prisoners were killed yesterday when inmates at a prison in Praia Grande, south-eastern Brazil, rioted after guards foiled their attempt to tunnel to freedom, police said. — Reuter.

Air strike

Israeli planes struck three times in Lebanon yesterday, after Hizbullah guerrillas wounded four pro-Israeli militiamen and an Israeli soldier, security sources said. — Reuter.

Star shot

Reggae and rap star Ricky Tresaud, known as "Supercat" was shot and seriously wounded during a robbery in Brooklyn, police said. — AP.

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Zaire fears showdown will bring meltdown

Chris McGreal in Kinshasa reports on the rebels' essential prize – President Mobutu's nuclear reactor

IN A wooded corner of Kinshasa reached via a quagmire once called a road, past collapsed electricity pylons and damaged university buildings, sits Africa's first nuclear reactor.

It is distinguished by its neatly whitewashed walls and front door with a lock. But that offers little reassurance to Kinshasa's more imaginative residents as the city awaits the final showdown between President Mobutu Sese Seko and his rebel enemies.

Rumours have swept the capital's townships that Mr Mobutu is hatching a diabolical plot to blow up the reactor and irradiate the entire city in a final act of nihilism.

Professor Butsana bu Nlungu, a nuclear scientist and head of Kinshasa university's physics department, laughs at the thought, until he reflects on what it might mean.

"Even if some crazy group blew it up with explosives," he said, "it could be quite bad, but it wouldn't be like an atomic bomb.

"There would be a cloud of radioactive dust which could kill people, and there's a pool of water in the reactor with lots of radioactivity. If it gets into the water table or the water pipes it could be bad. Unfortunately, most of Kinshasa's pipes have lots of holes in them."

He added: "But people are not wrong to be afraid because Mobutu did say, *'Après moi, le déluge'*. The big problem is the guys around President Mobutu. If there's a fight for the capital, who knows what they will do."

Kinshasa's reactor is an indirect legacy of an American atomic bomb project during the second world war.

The uranium for the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was mined in what was then the Belgian Congo and, after the war, the United States rewarded Belgium with its own nuclear centre.

In 1958, when Brussels thought it would hold on to its colony for many years, it built the Kinshasa reactor — the first in Africa.

Two years later, Zaire won its independence.

The reactor, updated with a new model in the mid-1970s, is used mainly for medical and genetic research. The latest experiments include bombarding corn with neutrons. Prof Bu Nlungu doubts the benefits.

"Some people think they can get a better species from this but I'm not convinced," he said. "They have to prove those characteristics are stable and they haven't done that. Personally I'd like to use the reactor for more physics research but it needs modernising and we don't have the money."

The International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna makes yearly inspections and helps meet the running costs. But it only offers advice and has no authority to shut down the reactor, which it says is properly maintained.

The Zairean staff are not so well cared for, however: they have not been paid in months. Prof Bu Nlungu is among them.

He joined Kinshasa university the year the reactor was built. By the late 1960s he held a clutch of qualifications in nuclear physics from Belgian and US universities, which offered him lucrative research posts. But in 1970 he thought it time to go home and build an advanced nuclear programme.

> There are rumours of a diabolical plot by the president to irradiate the entire city

"There were many offers from overseas, but at that time I thought President Mobutu was the right man for Zaire, and so I came back," he said. "Unfortunately, it was a very, very bad mistake."

Most of his work is done in a dilapidated classroom. The blackboard is freshly packed with complicated formulae.

Apart from the reactor, technology at the university is limited. The Chinese have installed new computers alongside the old ones, which were discarded by the local brewery. But the professor does not even have a phone.

He points at a grubby black ceramic instrument hanging disconsolately from the wall.

"That used to be a telephone, but the telephone workers had to survive. They used to come every month and say, 'Well, professor, we have been making repairs to your phone, give us money'. But it got to be too much so I asked them to cut it off.

"It doesn't really matter. Not many students are interested in nuclear physics anymore. They can't find jobs. "Students like political science, because they hope to be a minister and get rich. But things are changing. They may not get jobs any more either."

Inside story, G2, page 8

After the earthquake

Rescue workers search for bodies and survivors in the ruins of Qaen. Saturday's quake killed about 2,400 people in 200 villages in north-eastern Iran PHOTOGRAPH: JAMCHID BAIRAMI

Iran's president tours landscape of desolation

Steven Swindells in Qaen

IRAN'S president interrupted a foreign visit yesterday to inspect the destruction caused by Saturday's earthquake, which killed about 2,400 people.

Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani flew to Birjand, one of two regions in eastern Iran devastated by Saturday's quake, from neighbouring Turkmenistan, Tehran radio said.

He visited villages near the Afghan border before going to Qaen, near the epicentre of an earthquake, which measured 7.1 on the Richter scale and levelled 200 villages, injuring at least 6,000 people.

As his motorcade drove through the devastation, thousands mobbed his car, some clinging to it. At one point Mr Rafsanjani got out and hugged an old woman who had lost her husband.

Survivors of the quake were still scrambling among the ruins of their homes and burying their dead while waiting for aid.

An Iranian Red Crescent spokesman said yesterday that rescue workers would search the quake-stricken areas once again for survivors and bodies before winding up their operations.

In the rubble of the villages hit hardest, men, women and children wept and wailed as they picked through the debris of their mud-brick homes.

The government said it would pay 500,000 rials (£105) to every person who had lost a relative, Iran's news agency IRNA said.

Iran said 150 aftershocks had been registered. A new quake of 4.8 magnitude hit north-west Iran yesterday, but there were no casualties or damage, IRNA said. About 1,000 people were killed there by a quake in February.

United Nations and Iranian officials said the rescue operation would probably be wound up today.

"Our team called from the area this morning. The impression is that the death toll will not change drastically, because the rescue work in Birjand is complete and in Qaen it is 85 to 90 per cent finished," said a UN Development Programme official, Andres Frismark.

He said the human resources for rescue and relief were good, but assistance was needed to replenish the Iranian Red Crescent's supplies.

"They are doing extremely well, a marvellous job. But what has become critical now is the stocks," Mr Frismark said. "Help is needed urgently."

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies yesterday appealed for £5.2 million. The government appealed through the United Nations on Sunday for aid.

Mr Frismark said 50,000 people had been displaced. About 4,300 relief workers have set up 9,000 tents.
—Reuter.

International response to the appeal for emergency aid

- The British Government donated £100,000 to the Red Crescent.
- France said it was sending a 30-strong rescue squad with sniffer dogs. Its first aid shipment, an aircraft carrying 39 tons of equipment and medicine, has already landed in Iran.
- Switzerland dispatched a nine-member rescue team and specially trained dogs.
- Italy will send a plane with 36 tons of medicine and other aid.
- Japan will give $200,000 in cash and relief goods worth $417,000.
- Russia will send two cargo planes of food, medicine and other equipment.
- The Turkish Red Crescent sent a plane with 20 tons of aid worth £110,000.
- Greece said it was airlifting 20 tons of medicine and a surgical team.
- In Saudi Arabia, King Fahd ordered two C-130 cargo planes to Iran with equipment, food and medicine. The emir of Kuwait, has sent a plane with food, medicine, blankets and tents. Bahrain also ordered aid to be sent, and the United Arab Emirates sent two planes with tents, medicine and food. Egypt also sent a planeload of supplies.

Donations can be made by calling 0990 125125 or by post to British Red Cross Society, Iran Earthquake Appeal, Freepost, London SW1 7BR.

British troops ready to guard escape routes

Chris McGreal in Kinshasa

THE British army has plans to evacuate about 1,000 Commonwealth and European citizens if Kinshasa erupts into violence in a final confrontation between President Mobutu Sese Seko's troops and Zairean rebels.

If such an operation begins, British troops will join French, Belgian and United States forces in sealing off parts of Kinshasa to protect the routes to evacuation points. Officials declined to discuss whether foreign troops would remain in the city after an evacuation.

The army has selected four evacuation centres: the embassy, an Indian restaurant, a Hindu temple and an oil-company centre. Most evacuees will be taken in speed boats across the Congo river to Brazzaville. It should take about four minutes. Those at the oil centre will be flown out by helicopter.

There are probably more British soldiers involved in the operation than potential British evacuees. Fewer than 200 people in Kinshasa hold one of the various passports issued by Britain — full, overseas-citizens, and protected persons. About 350 British soldiers are stationed in Brazzaville and Libreville ready for the evacuation.

Although France, Belgium and the US have their own plans, the British will take any European Union citizens who turn up, and look after Americans, Australians and Canadians who find it easier to reach a British evacuation point.

Bottom of the list are other Commonwealth citizens: the single largest group comprises about 600 Indian passport holders, but there are some from Africa, notably Gambia.

Those who do not qualify for evacuation by the British — or who cannot find their passports — will be herded on to the embassy's tennis courts which are conveniently surrounded by high wire fences. They will be protected by British troops unless the embassy is abandoned altogether.

British officials say they will not order an evacuation until it is apparent that there is a serious threat to life — such as a full-scale rebel attack, rampaging government troops or mass looting — in part because if it is ordered too early many businessmen will be reluctant to leave.

Once the order is given, it will be announced on the BBC World Service. Those people entitled to leave with British forces will have 24 hours to reach an evacuation point.

Indian summit raises hopes

Suzanne Goldenberg in the Maldives

THE Indian and Pakistani prime ministers emerged jovial and relaxed yesterday from the first summit meeting between the two countries for four years.

The encounter between Inder Kumar Gujral and Nawaz Sharif at the Korumba island resort, on the fringe of a regional summit, is likely to encourage the hope that after 50 years the two neighbours can set aside their history of animosity.

The chemistry between them was apparent. They met for more than an hour, exchanging couplets of Urdu poetry, before retiring to a Chinese restaurant.

Although Indian and Pakistani diplomats shied away from describing the talks as a breakthrough, they were greatly cheered by the spirit of the meeting, which focused on confidence measures.

"We intend to continue with these talks," Mr Sharif told a press conference on the polished wood floor of the resort's disco.

"These occasions do not come every day. I have a personal rapport with Mr I K. Gujral, whom I met earlier in Islamabad. I like the man very much."

Mr Gujral said the two men had agreed on speedy action to secure the exchange of about 400 civilian prisoners, mainly fishermen who strayed outside territorial waters and people who overstayed visas. "Let's start on a clean slate," he said.

The two men did discuss the region's most intractable dispute — Kashmir, which has been the cause of two wars, and where Pakistan has supported an uprising against New Delhi's rule — but they focused more on less contentious areas and confidence measures: a civilian hotline, relaxation in visa procedures, and more humane treatment of diplomats, who are often harrassed or beaten on spying accusations.

Diplomats said there was also scope for increasing trade between the two countries — only $115 million in 1995-96, although smuggled contraband amounted to $500 million.

> Diplomats were greatly cheered by the spirit of the meeting

They suggested that northern India, which suffers from acute electricity shortages, could buy power from Pakistan.

Although there was little concrete result from these talks, the diplomats said that the leaders had laid the foundation for bettering relations by instructing officials to identify key areas to be addressed in the next round of talks.

Their diplomats are to meet in Islamabad next month to thrash out topics for negotiation and devise a mechanism for resolving disputes.

Patriotic misfits become model for the mainstream

Snubbed under British rule, five schools loyal to China will soon lead by example, reports **Andrew Higgins** in Hong Kong

ON A concrete basketball court in Kowloon, students in spotless white uniforms gathered yesterday to salute the hoisting of the red flag, a ritual of obedience to a new order 50 days away.

Loudspeakers rasped out a tinny recording of the Chinese national anthem.

"We are moving closer and closer to reunification with our motherland. This tremendously happy occasion is nearly upon us," intoned Cai Peiyuan, an official from the New China News Agency, the local arm of the Chinese Communist Party. "We will soon cleanse 150 years of shame."

While Hong Kong's elite, mostly English-speaking, schools scramble to shed badges with royal insignia, the Heung To middle school proudly parades the loyalties that, for most of the past half century, have branded staff and pupils as subversives or misfits.

Raided by police searching for bombmakers during Maoist riots in the 1960s, scoffed at by Hong Kong's plutocrats for teaching in Chinese instead of English, and snubbed by all but the most dogged leftwingers or the offspring of impoverished new mainland immigrants, the five "patriotic" schools are counting down the dying days of British rule with glee.

Rites that for so long put them on the margins of Hong Kong society — from saluting the red flag to denouncing British colonialism — will soon become a model for the mainstream. Hong Kong's future leader, Tung Chee-hwa, has even appointed a former Heung To teacher, an enigmatic businessman called Paul Yip, as his right-hand man.

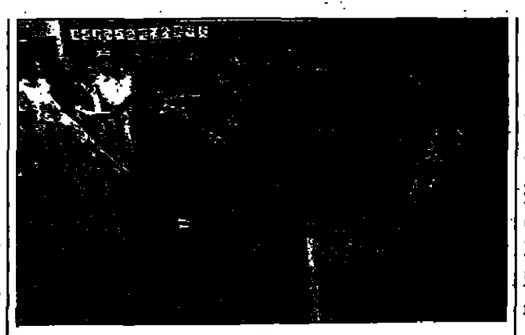
With little time left before the handover, schools are now preparing for the future — revising textbooks, teaching Mandarin, and telling pupils that China is not an alien state but their own country.

"Many Hong Kong people would go along with any government," said 13-year-old Lee Min-ji, who was chosen to raise the flag at Heung To yesterday, along with two classmates.

"I don't think they have a very strong sense of the nation. They will have to learn what it really means to love their country."

Wang Fengchao, a deputy director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, sparked a boisterous debate last year when he declared that more time should be be spent inculcating Chinese patriotism.

The teachers union warned of indoctrination, while pro-China headmasters backed the call to purge lingering loyalties to Britain.



Pupils at the Heung To school PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD JONES

The debate has extended to the revision of textbooks, particularly those dealing with sensitive episodes of history, such as the Opium War or the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989. Britain skewed history to its own purposes, preferring to present the conquest of Hong Kong as a righteous battle for free trade rather than a campaign to protect British drug dealers.

"All we want to do is teach our students to love their country," said Ho Kin-on, director of studies for civics at Heung To.

"What is wrong with patriotism? The whole world has it. Britain and the US teach young people to love their country. In Hong Kong we must do the same."

But love of country is often inseparable from love of the Communist Party at the "patriotic" schools. Students at Heung To begin the day with readings from Wen Wei Po or Ta Kung Pao, newspapers funded by and loyal to the party.

Miss Lee, the student flag-raiser, parrots China's view of Martin Lee, leader of the Democratic Party and a critic of Beijing's intentions in Hong Kong. "As a Chinese, he should not bad-mouth his country to foreigners," she says.

Such loyalty, though, can still falter. She hails the students who marched into Tiananmen Square in 1989 as patriots and heroes. She was only six at the time.

"Their hearts were filled with the same feelings as ours. They were patriots."

So was it wrong to open fire on unarmed demonstrators? "The government had its reasons for doing what it did. It was not wrong. But the students had their reasons too. They were not wrong either."

For years we all have been watching to see where the "information highway" forecast by Al Gore, would emerge from. Suddenly we discovered we were already driving on it.

G2 cover story

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The ethical dimension

Robin Cook has set himself high standards

ETHICS are not often mentioned in the same breath as foreign policy in our disorderly post-cold war world. Yesterday Robin Cook not only used the E-word but sounded as if he might mean it. National interest, he insisted, could not be defined only by narrow realpolitik. British foreign policy should have an "ethical dimension" and human rights should be at its heart. Most of this has been said or written before by Mr Cook or in the Labour Party's foreign policy statements. But it was much less prominent in the Labour manifesto and it is encouraging to see it re-emerge in prime time and place — 10 days after the election and in front of the cameras in the FO's Locarno Room. With (or preferably without) the glossy video which preceded Mr Cook's entry from stage left, it was an accomplished — and, on the whole, a believable — performance.

This is a very different sort of diplomatic discourse from the one amplified under Tory rule. Foreign policy has too often been reduced to a sub-Palmerstonian view of a world in which there are no eternal principles, other countries' initiatives are talked down, human rights issues are a distraction, and embassies can only justify their existence if they bring in trade. Mr Cook is inviting his staff (with another video, shortly to be dispatched to all missions abroad) to become more pro-active and make Britain "a force for good in the world." If the Foreign Office is to become more like a business, with its mission statement and performance targets, then its work, according to the Foreign Secretary, is not just *about* business. That too is worth saying at the start.

We should not be carried away too far: this is a circle-squaring enterprise, in which the ethical dimension fits awkwardly around the angular core of strategic and commercial self-interest. (This tougher streak should at least save a Labour government from the soft-centred muddle of Jimmy Carter). Mr Cook hopes to achieve this by creating situations in which bilateral action taken by Britain is buttressed by a multilateral framework of like-minded nations. Thus in denying arms sales to countries where the weapons will be misused, he seeks to ensure that "where we don't take up a contract, it is not taken up by our EU allies."

It may not be so easy to achieve, though Labour's more positive commitment to Europe might help to win some concessions. Mr Cook refused to tick off specific countries in advance on a list of human rights offenders (Nigeria was a commendable exception.) But hard decisions will come elsewhere soon enough after — as was made clear on the Gulf — existing contracts have been honoured.

Establishing a set of "benchmarks" — Mr Cook's own word — still moves the parameters of foreign policy discourse in an encouraging direction. Britain's EU allies are promised an "honest" effort by a British presidency to help them achieve what they want to do. National security is defined as going beyond military alliances to mean "an active policy of intervention in arms control and disarmament." An annual report on British efforts to promote human rights abroad will encourage public scrutiny. There is a pledge to promote "people's diplomacy" by making full use of the British Council and the BBC World Service: that should make it harder to clip their budgets again next time. Pushing the environment up the international agenda is another benchmark with a huge potential for achievement — or disappointment. Judgment must come later, but at least Mr Cook has given us the commitments against which the performance can (and will) be judged.

Restoring our own human rights

The next step for Labour ought to be a full-blown Commission

BRITISH rights are coming home. The European Convention on Human Rights, drafted by British lawyers 50 years ago, will be incorporated into British law. Hallelujah. This is a hosanna Labour really deserves. Five decades after becoming the first European state to sign the treaty, Britain will finally enjoy the protection of the Convention within its own system of justice. This is a victory for the small man, not the well-heeled corporation or aloof administrator.

Most of the people helped by the Convention have been poor or powerless — prisoners, mental patients, immigrants. But until now, the rights extended to British citizens by the Convention have had to be pursued in Strasbourg rather than the Strand. In every other European state, citizens seeking protection of the Convention have their cases dealt with in their own country first. Britain has remained the only member of the Council of Europe without a written constitution or a Bill of Rights. British judges have been ready to listen to arguments based on the Convention, but citizens have had no guarantee that it will be applied. It was frequently ignored as the succession of cases on which Strasbourg ruled has demonstrated.

Even liberals may have some worries. New privacy rights will come with the Convention. Could they, for example, impose an unnecessarily heavy restriction on the media? Initially, Labour intends the Convention should only apply to public authorities, but eventually the remit may be widened. Britain already suffers from far too onerous controls over legitimate media investigations through a combination of official secrets, libel, contempt of court and the ever-increasing tentacles of the law of confidentiality. But remember free speech — and a public right to know — are enshrined in the Convention too. Far from curbing press freedom in Britain, the Convention has widened it through Strasbourg rulings on Thalidomide, Spycatcher and the right of journalists to withhold their sources of information — protections which our own courts lamentably failed to provide. In the long-term, tabloids which commit gross intrusions of privacy in pursuit of prurient tales of non-public figures, may find themselves in breach of the Convention. That would be no bad thing as long as public interest journalism remains properly protected.

The long-term aim should not stop with incorporation. Labour has been consulting on a Human Rights Commission, which would embrace existing agencies fighting discrimination (race, gender, disability), monitor court decisions and ensure all pending legislation conforms with the Convention. Such "screening" — as it is known in the trade — is supposed to happen now, but a glance at Michael Howard's legislative record demonstrates the ease with which ministers can ignore their advisers. Yet rights are inalienable. Incorporation will help secure that principle.

A dressing down in the City

Gordon Brown launches a fresh revolution (sartorial)

IF Gordon Brown does nothing else as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he can at least rest content that he has done one thing which had hitherto seemed impossible. By declining to wear white tie and tails when he gives the annual Mansion House speech next month, Mr Brown has turned the lounge suit, embodiment of the anonymous male dress code of our era, into a fashion statement and a symbol of rebellion.

There are, of course, suits and suits. Bank managers and Conservative backbenchers wear one kind. John Birt and Glenn Hoddle wear the other. Mr Brown, on this as on some other matters, tends towards the "small c" conservative end of the available choices. In fact, the chancellor favours the dark crumpled suit to such a degree that it is not entirely clear that he possesses any other set of clothing.

Mr Brown's rejection of tie and tails has upset two sorts of people: those who believe that Britain is nothing without its traditions, and those who like dressing up. It is harder to sympathise with the former than the latter group. As so often in Britain, a so-called tradition turns out to have been invented in the late-Victorian era. The Mansion House speech was first given in 1877, so it is a tradition which is ripe for reinvention now that we have finally left Victorian Britain behind.

Dressing up, though, is another matter. The chancellor may not want to dress formally, though he would look pretty good in white tie and tails. But nor does he have to dress down, as though giving a big speech at a posh do is just another office chore. There are lots of other ways of dressing up and looking good, and the Mansion House speech gives Mr Brown an opportunity to forge a New Labour third way between being a stuffed shirt and a party pooper. What could be more suitable?

Letters to the Editor

The business of human rights

THE Colombian report referred to by Richard Brenner, of what he describes as the "Coalition Against BP In Colombia" (Letters, May 9), makes no reference whatsoever to any violation of human rights by BP. The report, far from being "leaked", is freely available in Colombia.

Your readers should also know that, in November 1996, BP asked the Colombian Prosecutor-General to mount a full inquiry into all the accusations made against our company, including those made by Richard Howitt MEP. We have promised our full co-operation with this investigation. Further, it is simply untrue to accuse us of preventing our staff in Colombia from joining trade unions: they have this right, but up to now have shown little desire to negotiate collectively.

Mr Brenner accuses BP of funding the Colombian military "to the tune of millions". It is public knowledge that BP and our partners (including Colombia's state oil company) have an agreement with the government to support the army in certain limited areas, such as food, accommodation and health. The choice is simple. Without protection, all the projects directed at increasing Colombia's economic and social prosperity could be threatened by guerrillas and terrorists.

Nobody denies the legitimate concerns for the protection of human rights in Colombia. But BP strenuously denies that we collude in, or justify, abuses when they occur. On the contrary, we condemn all abuses of human rights whoever commits them.
Russell Seal.
Managing Director,
British Petroleum plc.
Britannic House,
1 Finsbury Circus,
London EC2M 7BA.

THE real significance of Sir David Simon's appointment as Minister for Trade and Competitiveness in Europe is not his personal credentials, but the added empowerment thereby given to the policies of transnational corporations on free trade.

It comes as a shock to hear, from the World Trade Organisation, that developed countries, including the EU and the US, are pushing for an Agreement on Trade-related Investment Measures (Trims). If ratified, this would prevent national governments within the WTO from imposing trade-related restrictions on investment by foreign countries. This would restrain national governments from regulating their own human and ecological environments, and would lead to the destabilisation of local economic and environmental practices in developing countries.

Is not this destabilisation precisely what has been claimed for BP's operations in Colombia? The Ambassador to Columbia (Letters, May 10) may challenge the letter from Richard Brenner on particular consequences of BP's activities on human rights, but as long as free-trade policies negate environmental interests, human rights are sure to suffer too.
Jim Scott.
14 Richborne Terrace,
London SW8 1AU.

THE Guardian and the Labour government may see the appointment of Sir David Simon of BP as being in the "best American tradition" of politics (Leader, May 9) but I do not. I'm American, and when I think of the best tradition of American politics, I think of Thomas Paine, the Abolitionists, Eugene Debs, the IWW, Emma Goldman, Martin Luther King, Ralph Nader, Noam Chomsky, Michael Moore — but *not* the involvement of businessmen in politics, which is at the root of a lot of our problems.

Mr Blair and the Guardian may look forward to the day when "it will be as natural for businessmen to be Labour as it is for them to be Democrat as well as Republican in the US". But anyone who wants a real difference between the parties is likely to be disappointed if that day comes. There are no real differences between the major parties in the US, as both are owned by Big Business. The goal of capitalism is profit, not the greater good of society.
Don MacKeen.
7 Athole Gardens,
Glasgow G12 9AZ.

HOW extraordinary. In his lengthy reply to my letter concerning BP's activities in Colombia (May 10), ambassador Carlos Lemos Simmonds is unable to refute a single one of the concrete allegations raised. So will a satisfactory response now be forthcoming from other concerned parties — Sir David Simon, perhaps?
Richard Brenner.
Coalition Against
BP In Colombia.
BCM 7750, London WC1N 3XX.

Mr Branson hits the buffers

THERE has been no "relentless decline in rail travel" over the past 35 years, as asserted by Richard Branson (How Britain can get back on the rails, May 10). According to the Department of Transport, rail passenger kilometres increased by 3 per cent in the 30 years to 1993 (in contrast to a 22 per cent drop in bus and coach travel), while the 1980s was the first decade since the 1900s in which more — a lot more — passenger lines and stations opened than closed.

Branson also fails to mention that Virgin's ability to improve West Coast services depends on infrastructure investment by Railtrack.
Philip Jones.
109 Maycross Avenue,
Morden, Surrey SM4 4DF.

RICHARD Branson's enthusiasm for railways is admirable and I hope his vision of their transformation is realised. Unfortunately, there is no evidence, worldwide, that privatisation will bring this about. The standards he is aiming at have already been achieved, if not bettered, by the state-run systems in France, Germany, Switzerland and elsewhere.

The mystery is why our own Department of Transport was never fired by the same zeal for modern railways, whether under Conservative or Labour administrations. The solitary example of modern railway technology in the UK, the East Coast mainline, shows what even we can do. But why so little and so late?
R L Clifford.
25 Deben Drive,
Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 6QH.

RICHARD Branson states that updated train travel will remain at current prices. He fails to consider the people for whom train travel is already completely unaffordable. The new train operators should consider the option of a third class for people who do not wish for the comforts of air travel on trains, and who are merely trying to cross the country as cheaply as possible.
Angela Hunter.
Tour House,
Botton Village,
Danby, Whitby YO21 2NJ.

RICHARD Branson says Virgin's new *fast trains* will include at-seat television. *Please, no!* Train journeys are usually a chance for a quiet read, and I wouldn't want to spend my entire journey locked in the toilet cubicle to avoid the din.
Judith Sawyer.
Flat 1,
249 Southlands Road,
Bromley, Kent BR1 2EG.

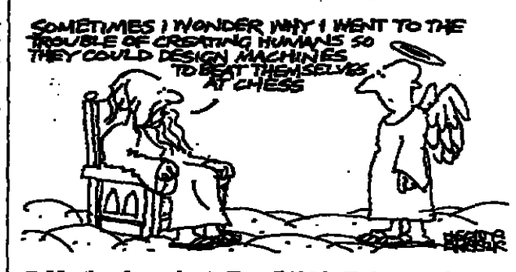
Last orders

THE manner of the announcement of the proposed Guinness and Grand Metropolitan merger highlights the failings of our dividend-obsessed, corporate-takeover culture. The employees were the last to hear that their jobs may be on the line — in this case, 2,000 are threatened. No consultation and no consideration; just the news that they are expendable.

Here is a golden opportunity for Labour's team at the DTI to put an end to what we call Rice Krispies redundancies: hearing you've lost your job over the radio at breakfast. If stakeholding is to mean anything, it must be that all the partners in the enterprise are consulted about these key decisions, rather than those who actually create the wealth being left to the end of the press-release queue to find out what's in store for them.

In the last 10 days a lot of shibboleths have been set aside in favour of real progress. Riding roughshod over employees' rights is another one whose days are surely numbered.
Roger Lyons.
General Secretary,
MSF union.
33-37 Moreland Street,
London EC1V 8BB.

Readers shake Kasparov out of the blues



ALL the fuss about Kasparov and Deep Blue is built on false premises (Computer leaves Kasparov blue, May 12). Chess was designed to be played by two examples of a multi-purpose organic being, potentially equal in capacity. The contest in which a highly resourced, single-purpose machine is matched against one of the more skilful of these beings is as purposeless as pitting Linford Christie against a robot in a 100 metres race.

Deep Blue did not win, because machines *cannot* win or lose; they just do what they are designed to do more or less well.
Peter Shield.
20 Willerby Road,
Woodthorpe,
Nottingham NG5 4PB.

I AM baffled as to why your reporters think that Deep Blue "has possibly passed the [Turing] test". The program's triumph is a significant event in cybernetics; but, as it is not designed to answer questions on any subject whatever, it is no more a candidate for the Turing test than a washing machine.
Colin Fine.
66 High Ash,
Shipley, W Yorks BD18 1NE.

KASPAROV'S true adversaries were the unsung programmes writers who created the software. It is like suggesting a Formula 10 car could win a race without a driver.
Reg Williamson.
67 Galleys Bank,
Kidsgrove ST7 4DE.

CHESS is a very narrow problem when compared with real life; pieces move in simple, fixed ways on a small eight-by-eight board. Deep Blue is unable to consider the myriad complexities of life beyond chess; if there had been, say, a fire in the competition hall, I would have put my money on Kasparov improvising a better escape route than Deep Blue.

While the problems of vision and language interpretation remain intractable, a general-purpose, adaptable computer intelligence comparable to the human mind remains centuries away.
Marc Henry.
Room 27, Walkley House,
Burnaby Crescent,
Sheffield S6 2TS.

PART of IBM's interest in chess programs is in the lessons they have to teach for producing other computer programs, for instance those to be used on the battlefield. It would be disastrous to have a computer program controlling a war that was only prepared to win or lose, and would not sue for peace or consider a ceasefire.
Alex Chablo.
23 Goulden Road,
Manchester M20 4ZE.

Asylum plea

THE death in Algeria of Mourad Amara following two and a half years pursuing an unsuccessful asylum claim (Report, May 10) highlights the inability of the UK asylum procedures to identify and protect those fleeing persecution. The system is lengthy, expensive and unfair. Few are recognised as refugees, many are without welfare benefits for the duration of their asylum application and an increasing number are unfairly and arbitrarily held in detention pending the outcome of their claim.

This is a challenge for the new government: to introduce an asylum determination procedure which is both fair and effective, a procedure which rapidly identifies those in need of protection, and those who are not, and which avoids the deterrent measure introduced by the last government.
Jan Shaw.
Amnesty International UK,
99-119 Rosebery Avenue,
London EC1R 4RE.

Smoke signal

THE tobacco industry is in no position to deny that tobacco advertising influences children (Report, May 6) since they agreed not to advertise within 200 metres of schools. We'll stop asking for a law to ban tobacco advertising if they'll agree to restrict adverts to places where they can *never* be seen by children — North Sea oil rigs, perhaps.
Donald Reid.
Chief Executive,
Association for Public Health.
Mabledon Place,
London WC1H 9TX.

THE tobacco industry claims their advertising merely persuades smokers to change to or stick with various brands. If true, that would mean that if all tobacco advertising were banned, profits would increase by the amount no longer spent on such advertising. What a windfall for them.
Richard Skinner.
Little Bystock, Bystock Close,
Exeter, Devon EX4 4JJ.

Animal wrongs

IN response to the letter from Professor Addrian Hutson (May 8), father of "Animal", I too am delighted that Dr Adrian Rogers has lost his seat — his views are reprehensible and reactionary and the electorate showed good sense in rejecting him. However, at least he had the decency to test his views via the democratic process. What a pity Professor Hutson's daughter does not have the same decency.

The trespassers at Manchester Airport come from the same political tradition as Mussolini and Pol Pot in rejecting the ballot box in favour of direct action and violence.
Graham Stringer MP.
Chair of the Board,
Manchester Airport plc,
Manchester M90 1QX.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is given; please give a full postal address. We may edit letters: shorter ones are preferred

A Country Diary

CHESHIRE: The young man was crouched over camera and tripod as I approached, framing his next shot in the view-finder. When he realised I was close by, he looked up and, with the sweep of an arm, indicated the scene he was trying to capture on film. We were in the western woods and the floorshow was spectacular; a carpet of colour — blue, yellow, red and white — with the spring flowers at their very best.

The photographer had chosen his spot well — a profusion of bluebells and yellow archangel, dotted here and there with red campion, set against a backdrop of the pure white, star-shaped flowers of ransoms, the wild garlic, which covered the gently sloping side of the valley.

After a lengthy discussion on the motives of those planners and developers who would destroy such sites of natural beauty to build more motorways, bypasses and runways, I left the young man and headed towards the northern woods. Eventually I strayed off the path and pushed my way through rhododendron bushes into a secluded glade that ran down to the river. Here I added another colour to my list — the early purple orchids were in bloom. This was a small colony, now threatened by scrub invasion, and in recent years numbers have gradually declined — this year I could only find three spikes. The rich magenta of their flowering parts was a striking contrast with the bluebells among which they were growing. At the base of each stem was a large rosette of several long, blunt leaves, which had shiny surfaces heavily marked with irregular purple blotches.

I sat down on an old beech log, took my camera out to take a photo — one was enough, such a peaceful spot deserved its privacy.

J M THOMPSON

هكذا من الأصل

Diary

Matthew Norman

FRESH from their triumph on Have I Got News For You, Christine and Neil Hamilton continue their metamorphosis into the new first couple of showbiz with news of another engagement. In June, cameras from Carlton TV's cookery show Can't Stand The Heat, which puts "successful men" in the kitchen, will go to the Old Rectory, Nether Alderley, to film them playing at being Fanny and Johnny. The Hammies will cook Pâté Margarite, a dish of spinach, anchovies and hard-boiled eggs (and shavings, no doubt, of broken glass) which Mrs Thatcher apparently loved when she visited their gracious home. Students of the couple's restaurant chits at the Paris Ritz will be pleased to note this preference for simple cooking, while news that the combined fee is under £100 is an eye-opener. Meanwhile, TV experts wonder how long before the Hammies are invited to stand in for Richard and Judy . . . and from there make the short hop to a series of their own? May the Lord have mercy.

DIARY forecaster Steptoe has been forced to postpone making his predictions about the Tory leadership. The dog, widely regarded as western Europe's top canine soothsayer, was tending towards Peter Lilley until it emerged that Sir Tim Bell, chief toilet spokesman for Lord Andrew Lloyd-Webber, has attached himself to the Lilley team.

MEANWHILE, the would-be assassin of another leadership contender is more popular than ever. Richard Heller, leader of the Penal League For Howard Reform — an organisation dedicated to destroying my sniffy friend's career — has written to Ann Widdecombe. "The League noted the frequency with which Michael Howard left you to make unpopular statements to the Commons or media," writes Heller, a Mastermind runner-up, "which makes a mockery of his current promise to lead the Conservatives from the front." He has also written to Ken Clarke, offering the League's sevices in thwarting Howard's crack at the leadership bid. Neither has replied yet, he admits, but it's early days.

A POSITIVE sighting has ended alarm over the whereabouts of Oofy Wegg-Prosser. Oofy was seen on Saturday with Mandy Mandelson in a trendy Notting Hill florist. When her husband involuntarily shouted out "Mandy alert! Mandy alert!", our informant reports that the Minister made no response, continuing instead to purchase some pastel tulips. Oofy, whom she describes as "like a younger Alan Bennett," stood by silently when Mandy began peering closely into the pram containing her new-born. Aware of his fabled rapport with small children, the informant was thrilled until she realised Mandy was scrutinising not her baby daughter, but the headline on the Irish Times ("Blair Meetings Raise Hopes For Early Progress In The North") nestling in the pram beside her.

ANYONE looking for hints as to whether or not Labour plans to privatise the Post Office may be intrigued by a story about Ed Balls, Gordon Brown's chief economic adviser. A few months ago, when the subject of rail privatisation was raised at a meeting of his ward in Hackney, east London, Mr Balls swiftly steered the discussion to the Post Office. He had gone to his local sorting office for a parcel, he said, and when he asked to buy some stamps, was told that they had run out days before. That, he said, would never happen in a private company.

ANOTHER enemy of Post Office incompetence, we suspect, is a Sunday Times sub-editor who spent many years researching and writing an authorative book called The History Of The Royal Mail. The nameless sub is not believed to have savoured the irony when his only copy of the manuscript got lost in the post.

No such thing as an ethical free ride

Commentary

Hugo Young

ROBIN Cook's predecessors as Foreign Secretary, like pantomime dames, each produced a catchline to mark their presence on the stage. Both phrases had their comic aspect. Douglas Hurd kept on saying that Britain "punched above our weight". Malcolm Rifkind, uniquely in the annals, pronounced that we should be ready "to accept a loss of influence" because this might be the way to protect our interests: such was the depth to which Tory Europhobia sank him.

Robin Cook yesterday stated that his mission is to make Britain "a force for good in the world". Is this any more meaningful than what went before?

Mr Cook's mission statement is arresting in several ways. For one thing, it doesn't start by waving the Union Jack. That comes second in the list of goals, after international security. Moreover, the flag, when hoisted, is deemed to follow trade, not vice versa. Exports and jobs are here defined as the domestic purpose of British foreign policy, rather than an airy-fairy claim for British diplomatic superiority.

Most striking of all, the environment is raised by this Foreign Secretary to a higher place in the pecking-order than it has ever occupied. Even so, to be a force for good, what Cook calls "the ethical dimension" is what matters. Advancing human rights will be "at the heart of our foreign policy," he said. How can he deliver on this promise?

Not long after Douglas Hurd got the job, he said something similar. Tory foreign policy included the pledge to keep a close eye on political reform as a pre-condition of British aid. While rewarding democratic governments, Hurd wrote, "we should penalise particularly bad cases of repression and abuse of human rights".

Before Cook's ethical dimension came what Hurd called "the moral imperative". It didn't last long. As the years passed, Hurd became a cold-eyed Metternich, explicitly dubious about the human-rights dimension, fatigued, if not enraged, by moral imperatives, who finished up being judged by the High Court to have illicitly fused aid and arms-sales in the case of the Pergau Dam.

But Hurd wasn't a bad man. Although a self-confident casuist, he always acted in the British interest, as he saw it. Robin Cook, on becoming his shadow, quite properly attacked him, yet the issues aren't going to be any easier for a Cook than they were for a Hurd, even though these two substantial politicians appear to start with different prejudices, as has already been shown by Labour's enthusiastic move to get a Europe-wide ban on the making and selling of land-mines.

Consider just two of the problems. First, arms-sales, one of Britain's biggest export categories and a massive job-provider. Plainly, by the Cook test, all customers for British arms should pass a human-rights threshold, encompassing not only democracy but freedom from repression. Many buyers — Saudi Arabia, Indonesia — do not survive even mild scrutiny of these matters.

Indonesia is the instantly topical case: a purchaser which pretends the aircraft we sell it have no role in internal repression, and has hitherto basked in the indifference of an amoral government towards rigorously testing the truth or falsity of that claim.

The policy document Cook produced for the 1996 party conference painted the picture well. "While the Conservative Overseas Aid minister has regularly toured the developing world calling on poor countries to reduce their expenditure on arms .... Conservative Defence ministers have been pressing those self-same countries to purchase British weapons irrespective of their record on democracy and human rights."

How can that contradiction be effaced, other than by modifying the second goal defined in yesterday's mission statement, which is "to promote British exports and boost British jobs"?

Secondly, take China, which openly despises UN attempts to make it commit itself to a global human-rights standard. Treating China as a pawn between the macho rivalries of Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich, Washington, which is the most important player, has no coherent policy. How can Britain supply a better one?

The largest obligation, which this country alone could satisfy, would be to offer passports to all Hong Kongers who wanted them. A true human-rights priority requires that much, even at this late stage, of Foreign Secretary Cook. But below this fanciful possibility, the trading relationship itself is unlikely to evoke from Labour any more principled a policy than from the Tories. And, arguably, why should it? If economic growth is an instrument of political liberation, as it edges towards being in China, how would boycotts and belligerence advance the cause of human rights?

> Offer passports to all Hong Kongers who want them — a true human-rights priority

These are hard questions. Aid and trade with some of the authoritarian tiger economies of east and south Asia pose others. The Saudi question, both at home and abroad, raises many issues for a "moral" government, whether about arms-sales or the sheltering of anti-regime Islamic extremists in London. Mr Cook will require all his subtlety to find half-way proper answers that accord with his statement of aims. But two strands are already suggestive.

The first is openness. What ran through the Scott Report on arms-to-Iraq, and the Pergau Dam scandal, and much else that's come to light in this field, is the secrecy with which, it is widely claimed, the arms trade must be conducted. Post-Scott, some modest changes in accountability were proposed but, by the Cook test, the secrecy level would still be indefensible.

Whether Indonesia meets the requirements for arms-sales is a matter worthy of public argument before, not after, contracts are signed. The invariable demands from purchasers that all deals should be confidential are not compatible with the kind of accountability that gives Britain some chance of being a model force for good in the world.

Opening up these matters would be commercially risky. Some sales would be lost. But if Mr Cook's words yesterday, and his numerous commitments to higher standards than the Tories during the Scott debates, mean anything, they accept that danger. There's no such thing as an ethical free ride. When the choice lies between principles and jobs, Mr Cook will need to be encouraged not to betray his principles.

That points to the other consequence of his mission statement. He will be held to the kind of pledge which, elsewhere on its agenda, the Blair government has been careful not to give: visible, ambitious, demanding.

This is the biggest difference between past and present. When Douglas Hurd talked about penalising human rights abuses, his constituency was never likely to pressure him to deliver. Nobody expected very much. In Cook's case, both the man and the party demand more. In 1997, "ethical dimension" is not a pantomime performance.

Earthquake aftershocks for relief agencies

George Monbiot

NO one listening to the Today programme yesterday could have been left in any doubt that the Iranian government is as cruel and arrogant as we've always been led to believe, placing human welfare way below national pride.

The International Rescue Corps (IRC), a British charity, had been preparing to send a special search-and-rescue team to eastern Iran to hunt for people buried by Saturday's earthquake. Just as it was about to set off, the embassy informed the Corps that its services would not be required, and its visas had been stopped. An IRC spokesman told the programme of his intense frustration, as he and his colleagues kicked their heels while people slowly died.

So why is Iran turning its rescuers away? Is it, like North Korea, refusing to accept that it can't cope, that it has no option but to beg its sworn enemies for assistance? Or does it know something that the Today programme doesn't? I can't help wondering whether it might not be experience, rather than arrogance, which leads the government to believe that there's no such thing as a free lunch, even when it is handed out by charities.

Almost every recent disaster in the developing world has been followed by a second plague: a swarm of underqualified relief agencies propelled into action by their fund-raising departments. As donations shrink and competition between our myriad charities intensifies, more and more feel driven to attend the high-profile calamities, even when they know that there is little they can do to help.

This response may bring the money rolling in, but it does nothing for the reputation of relief workers. In Rwanda, three years after the first emergency, there is still deep resentment towards the young and inexperienced westerners who rode to the rescue in their new 4-by-4s, tried out a host of untested theories, then departed as soon as the film crews left.

Conversely, some of the workers who were sent to Somalia still mutter bitterly about risking their lives to rescue their PR departments. The charities which *are* capable of responding properly can only watch aghast as their credibility is wrecked by people who haven't the faintest idea what they're doing.

None of this is to suggest, of course, that the International Rescue Corps is a cynical or incompetent ambulance chaser — on the contrary, its staff are both dedicated and highly skilled. But it is significant that its offer of help was not, according to our government's Department for International Development, "part of a co-ordinated response". Co-ordination is what makes the difference between effective and merely spectacular disaster relief.

After the 1990 earthquake, the IRC was, with the help of some international pressure, allowed into Iran. After seven days, during which it found no survivors, it returned home. Since then it has never been back, nor has it once approached the Iranian authorities. If, as it claims, the Iranians do not have the expertise to cope with the new disaster, then this surely reflects upon itself. Why should it expect to be allowed to move in when it pleases, when it has done nothing to help secure Iran's own capacity to respond?

In fact, Iran's search-and-rescue efforts seem to be working rather well. The government knows what it needs and who to ask. Foreign miracle workers might make the odd remarkable discovery — a child still living after a fortnight underground, for example — but the 40,000 without homes, food, blankets and water need not miracles, but more mundane, less newsworthy, assistance.

Oxfam's approach is salutary: instead of rolling into the country in its own name, it is quietly channelling its assistance through the Iranian Red Crescent, which is known and trusted by both the authorities and local people. Discretion, after all, is surely what giving is all about.

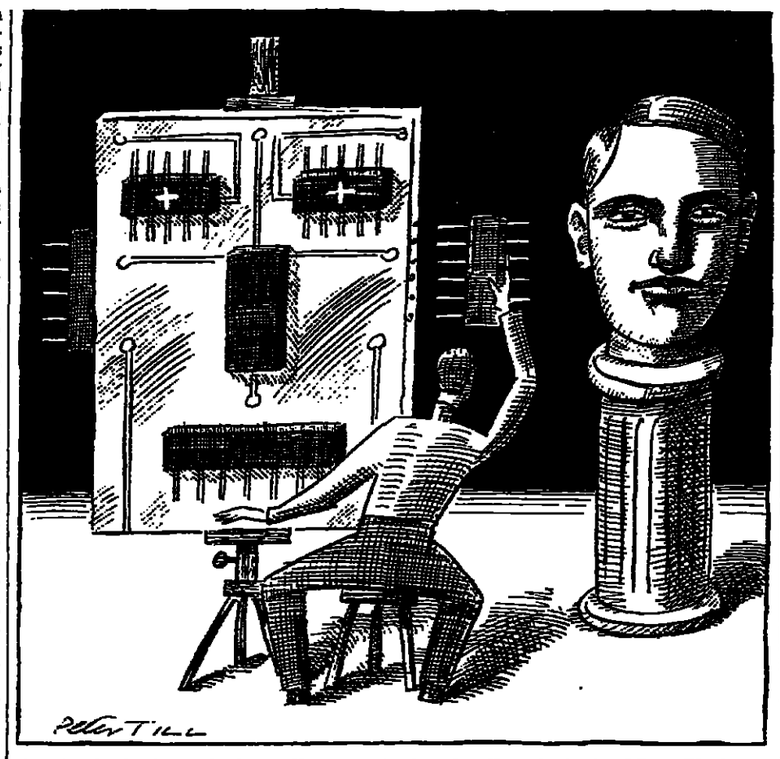
IRAN has other reasons to be suspicious of international assistance. Every disaster in the Third World attracts a fleet of Trojan trucks. American famine relief arrives in sacks printed with the stars and stripes and USA Wheat writ so large that even the dying are left in no doubt that God is an American. In Rwanda, Protestant evangelists offered food relief only to those who agreed to be baptised, and gave away a Bible with every sack of grain.

Many First World nations see disaster relief as a cheap and easy means of gaining diplomatic credit, which swiftly translates into lucrative re-development contracts when the crisis has passed.

We call for humility from governments whose countries are gripped by disaster, but they surely have just as much right to call for humility from us. We will never meet their people's needs until we disregard our own. The surest test of an agency's effectiveness is not that it sustains itself, but that it makes itself redundant.

The brain done better

Humans should be proud of our boy Kasparov, says **Bill O'Neill**, though he lost his chess tournament to IBM's Deep Blue computer and the industry's heavyweights



IT'S late afternoon in the Guardian's newsroom, and reporters are hammering away at their keyboards with increasing intensity. Phone calls are answered abruptly and coffee is sipped without eyes leaving screens. Then just as an end seems in sight and stories look set to hit deadlines for the paper's first edition, the computer network crashes.

Screens freeze and prose that hasn't been saved to the hard disc is lost forever. Desks are thumped as intellectual springs uncoil. The frustration is immense. Whether computers have brains may be debatable; they certainly have no hearts.

At least that was clear at the weekend, you might think, when the world's greatest-ever chessplayer was finally defeated by a computer, a big computer, but a computer nonetheless. Kasparov was left spent and miserable; Deep Blue, all silicon chips and cooling circuits, remained triumphantly mute.

But if we are now on the threshold of creating a thinking machine, an artificial device capable of thwarting the most powerful brains in human history, how come we are still frustrated so regularly by the computer's dumbness? You would think that if IBM can design, build and nurture such an impressive artifice as Deep Blue, we could at least expect to work with more reliable machines in our everyday lives.

Kasparov, of course, has no doubts that he was cheated of the crown and that the prospect of a thinking computer is as far off as it ever was. He maintains that Deep Blue's minders, some of the most heavyweight computer scientists in the business, broke rules by tinkering with their machine's software between matches in the six-game series. He has a point.

While tennis players, for instance, may modify their game during a match to take account of an opponent's strengths or weaknesses, they don't screw on a new arm or bolt on leg extensions to give themselves an extra powerful serve or topspin.

However, the fact that Kasparov dares to insist that he could easily defeat Deep Blue under strict tournament conditions says one thing unequivocally: computers have made extraordinary strides even by the standards of an industry in which processing power doubles every two years.

Computers may never think, as we understand the term; but is that relevant? On the basis of Deep Blue's performance last year and this, we can expect much more impressive machines next year, and the year after, and the year after that. Silicon's days as the ideal microprocessing substrate are already numbered as the size of individual processors continues to shrink. Other materials, including natural biochemical systems, promise a much denser concentration of processing power. Subsequent generations of Deep Blue may not differ in physical size, but they will be supremely faster operators. They will also cost many more millions to create than this year's Deep Blue, but that will be of little concern to IBM, which, after years of corporate difficulties, scored a major public-relations coup with the victory.

Under such circumstances, we should be proud of our representative in last week's contest. He was facing more that the most souped-up computer ever; he was taking on an industry's corporate icon. And the boy done well.

As Kasparov sweated, IBM's boss Lou Gerstner joined a top line-up of chief executives in the computer industry at the corporate campus of Bill Gates, the boss of Microsoft and the wealthiest person in the US. It was a "light diversion" in the words of one attendee, but one at which the underlying mood was of concern for the future direction of computing.

About one in three homes in the US has a personal computer, compared with about one in 20 in the UK, and the ratio in the US is static. One by one, industry chiefs are coming to the conclusion that the computer is too cumbersome to use to attract significantly more sales.

The solution is a simpler device, something that is as easy to use as the telephone or the television. Such a machine would need huge processing power at some point in its network. The network would have to be reliable, of course; but if that means Kasparov losing more matches, then . . .

Bill O'Neill edits the Guardian's OnLine section

Give them a proper job not welfare

Patricia Hewitt offers the Chancellor advice in the new fight against dependency

LABOUR'S manifesto pledges a radical Welfare to Work programme: new opportunities for 250,000 under-25s, a tax rebate to employers taking on others unemployed for more than two years and employment advice for lone parents. At this stage, some particular issues need urgent attention.

First, there is no need for Labour to accept old Conservative definitions of the unemployed. After years of manipulation of figures, there is not much connection between those registered as unemployed and people actually out of work. As a 28-year-old man told me: "I've been on so many schemes and temporary jobs, I've only been 'unemployed' for three months. But I've not had a proper job since I left school."

The register does not only exclude younger people in and out of second-rate training schemes and casual jobs. Lone mothers, the partners of unemployed men and those on family credit, and people with illness or disability, don't count as unemployed, but all live off benefit, and many want work.

Rather than re-define unemployment yet again (itself a vexed political and statistical question), the Government should take a different view of who qualifies for the programme. Within Labour's proposed budget and time-limits (six months out of work for the under-25s, two years for others), why shouldn't Welfare to Work embrace *anyone* now on welfare who is able to work? A 23-year-old lone mother enabled to take a job is just as much a success as a 23-year-old single man. The programme should reflect these realities, not artificial (and gender-biased) categories.

The proposed rebate to employers will help some claimants to move straight into the private sector. But two of the four options for the under-25s involve voluntary organisations. Under the umbrella of the Environmental Taskforce, voluntary agencies could offer simple energy-efficiency schemes, landscaping and waste re-use centres — good for young people and for the quality of life.

But "win-win" thinking need not be confined to the environment. During the campaign, Gordon Brown spoke of "partnership projects" employing local people to deliver local services. Here is the key not only to changing individual lives, but to transforming the communities where so many people without work live. North Braunstone in my constituency is one such estate, where one in four working-age men is officially unemployed, and a far higher proportion of men and women are without work. At Braunstone Resource Centre is a small crèche, due to close in June through budget cuts. The same fate awaits a playgroup on another low-income Leicester estate, Stocking Farm. The closures are not the fault of the new city council, trying to preserve its schools budget. But they are economic and social madness. With small investments, groups like these can deliver good quality care and education for the children; training for women (and, with the right encouragement, men) to qualify as child-care workers; and a service which enables parents to take a regular job.

Labour could also experiment with community jobs services, training the previously unemployed to help others make the change. Information and communication technologies open up *other possibilities. Since* work can be done anywhere at the end of a phone line, why not create a Welfare to Work equivalent of Gordon Brown's University for Industry? A group such as Manpower could employ people previously on benefit for screen-based training and work.

By bringing together Employment and Education, Social Security, Environment, Scotland and Wales with the Treasury, Brown has initiated the joined-up policy thinking needed to transform the welfare state into a "Welfare to Work state". He can do here what he has done with his Bank of England coup — set a clear goal from government, while empowering those best placed to deliver to do so. Welfare to Work will only succeed if the top-down power of government is used to release the bottom-up power of the people.

Patricia Hewitt is Labour MP for Leicester West. She was deputy chair of the Commission for Social Justice and is a trustee of the IPPR

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Chien-Shiung Wu

Breaking down the laws of parity

Wise words from the Dragon Lady . . . Wu addresses the Geneva symposium held to mark her 80th birthday

PROFESSOR Chien-Shiung Wu, who has died aged 83, was a physicist whose brilliance carried her from obscurity in China during the early thirties to fame in the United States during and after the second world war. As a post-doctoral physicist, speaking idiosyncratic English but with a unique knowledge of gaseous fission products, she was called in by the great Enrico Fermi when, in 1942, an experimental reactor began to run down within weeks of going critical. She quickly and correctly diagnosed poisoning by the rare gas xenon, produced in the fission process.

Her first major scientific achievement, however, came a decade later when she showed, through meticulous experiment, that the "natural" physical laws of conservation of symmetry and parity (equal-handedness), which had been accepted in theories of nuclear physics since the twenties, are violated in the process of beta decay — the form of radioactivity in which an energetic electron is emitted from an atom.

According to theory, electrons should have been emitted in equal numbers in all directions. Through new techniques for lining up atomic spin in ultra-cold experiments, she showed that electrons are emitted in a preferred direction, a finding which challenged ideas then central to science. With this she came within a whisker of sharing the 1957 Nobel Prize with her fellow countrymen Lee and Yang, with whom she has discussed proof of parity and who afterwards, through the mathematical analysis of an entirely different process of decay — that of the recently discovered strange particle, the K-meson — also proved that the law of conservation of parity can be violated.

Many scientists felt that Wu's contribution had been played down, although she herself, neither critical nor bitter, explained publicly that the award had been made strictly in accordance with the Nobel rules. Privately, however, she may well have felt slighted, an experience that would have reinforced her conviction that women are undervalued in science. All her first scientific papers had been published under the name C S Wu because she felt that this would improve her chances of publication: in China, as in the West, physics was a male dominated activity.

She grew up as a passionate nationalist in the China led by General Chiang Kai-shek, where tradition allowed few women into the highest levels of scientific education. As a student protected by outstanding gifts she was almost self-selected as an activist. In the 1930s, when protest was hazardous, she lead a silent student march to the gates of Chiang Kai-shek's own courtyard, begging him to take action to prevent invasion by the Japanese. It was inevitable that the pressures which shaped her into one of the most powerful experimental scientists of the century would also create a lifelong feminist.

> On the continuing dominance of men in mathematics and physics she said: 'It seems most unlikely that molecular structures or mathematical symbols have a sexual preference'

Wu's career has echoes of Marie Curie. Her life's work was concerned primarily with uranium fission and radiation: to carry her science forward she had to go abroad, where she worked obsessively and achieved international fame; and, while abroad, she married a fellow physicist, abandoning all thoughts of returning home. Wu was strikingly good looking, although some students complained that she could be fierce. These characteristics, coupled with her custom of wearing elegant oriental dress, led to the affectionate nickname of the Dragon Lady. Although now almost forgotten, this was also a beautiful but sinister American comic-strip character of the forties and fifties based on the public image of Chiang Kai-shek's magisterial wife. As an image of C S Wu this was, in fact, a long way from the truth. Although Wu drove herself to the limits and expected her students and colleagues to do the same, she was deeply humane and possessed a sensitive social conscience. She was, however, powerfully driven both by her own inner fire as an investigative scientist and her belief that, to hold her position as a professional academic in America, she had to be seen to be better than her American male colleagues.

During the late thirties in the US, when she was first at Berkeley under Emilio Segre and Ernest O Lawrence carrying out doctoral and, from 1940, post-doctoral studies of the inert gases created during the process of nuclear fission, leading physicists came to know of her as the "brilliant Miss Wu." In her group, mainly young and male, she was also known as the Belle of Berkeley. But the cool Miss Wu was already deeply involved with another Chinese physics student, Yuang Chia-liu, to whom she had been introduced through family channels when she arrived in San Francisco in 1936.

Yuan, the grandson of Yuan Shikai — a famous general at the end of the Manchu Dynasty — had also been brought up to believe in democracy. As a physicist he was in many ways as gifted as Wu and, like her, had been sent to America to extend his physics education to levels not available in China. At Berkeley, while Wu worked with "cyclotron" Lawrence, Yuang Chia-liu studied particle physics under Robert Millikan, an equally famous physics Nobel Laureate.

Later, having Americanised his name to Luke Yuan, he went on to earn wartime respect in US radar research and peacetime honours as a designer of particle accelerators at Brookhaven. But in 1942 he did something of greater importance. He married the elegant Miss Wu at a service held in Robert Millikan's garden, close to the Berkeley campus. Together they went east, Yuan to RCA at Princeton and Wu to Smith College at Northampton, Massachussetts.

By this time the Manhattan atom bomb project was getting into top gear under Robert Oppenheimer. In spite of her rare expertise Wu was not at first asked to join. Instead, prompted by Ernest Lawrence, several major universities including the Massachussetts Institute of Technology, Princeton and Columbia, New York — in none of which women had hitherto been considered for teaching posts in physics — offered her lectureships. She chose Princeton to be close to Yuan.

Within months, however, she was called to Columbia for an interview held in scientists' rooms in the university's new department of war research. After a day of close questioning on pure physics she was asked whether she was aware of the kind of work they were doing. "Had you not wanted me to know that, you should have cleaned the blackboards" she joked, accepting an immediate invitation to join the group. Wu spent the rest of the war working in a converted warehouse at Columbia, designing and constructing radiation detectors for the Manhattan Project.

One of the few scientists on the project to be offered a staff post at Columbia, Wu become the university's first woman professor of physics in 1957, quickly extending her research activities. In 1958 she meticulously confirmed the theory of vector current conservation in particle decay, which had just been put forward by Feynman and Murray Gell-Mann.

Wu was greatly distressed by the political hounding and death of Oppenheimer, for whom she had great respect and who was said to be one of the very few people allowed to call her "Jeffei" (little sister). Wu and Yuan had been invited back to China as professors at the Chinese National University but, because of the political turmoil and the rise of communism, they decided to stay where they were. They knew that, if they went back to China, they might never again be allowed to return to America.

Wu's son Vincent had been born in 1947 and the family lived very close to the Columbia campus. After her ascent of the academic ladder she declared that, apart from a deeply understanding husband, a woman seeking success in science "needs to live close to her work and have someone whom she knows will look after her children well". She recalled her own childhood in Liuhe near Shanghai as extremely happy. A year before she was born her father, an engineer, had taken part in the revolution that ended the rule of the Manchu dynasty. She was brought up in an atmosphere of new freedoms and optimism. Her father abandoned engineering to establish one of the first schools for girls in China. He named his daughter Chien-Shiung (Conquering Hero) because he knew that, as a woman in a changing world, she would have many battles ahead.

Wu went far beyond the education in science normally available to girls at that time. She succeeded largely because of an extraordinary ability to teach herself from the physics and mathematics text books and exercises borrowed, at night, from other students. Her brilliance was obvious. Before she took up physics at the National University, she brought her mathematics up to speed on text books provided by her father.

She became increasingly concerned, as her career developed, about the continuing dominance of the influence of men in mathematics, physics and technology. "It seems most unlikely that molecular structures or mathematical symbols have a sexual preference," she said. And she was always pleased to point out that male-dominated technology had made an appalling mess of the planet. In science Wu received almost every prize available to her, including the US Presidential award, becoming an honoured visitor in European laboratories. After her retirement in 1981 she embarked on lecture and advisory tours in China and elsewhere in the Far East, and toured North America trying to persuade authorities that they should ensure stability in scientific support, while also persuading more women to enter science.

In 1992, Wu came to Europe for an 80th birthday symposium held in her honour at the international Cern laboratory at Geneva. She was delighted and, with her early difficulties with English still evident, talked about her beta decay work and the importance of choosing critical experiments. It is said that few left the meeting uninspired by her amazing clarity of thought, or unmoved by the power of her quiet yet very special genius.

Anthony Tucker

Professor Chien-Shiung Wu, physicist, born May 12, 1912, died February 16, 1997

Augusta Céspedes

Inside stories of the revolution

THE Bolivian Augusta Céspedes, who has died aged 94, was the last of those revolutionary writers — such as the Mexicans José Vasconcelos or Martin Luis Guzmán — who were also key characters of the times they chronicled. His name and pen are associated with the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario, MNR, now in government) he helped found in 1941.

In 1952 the MNR started one of the most successful and far-reaching revolutions of the Latin American continent. It liberated the Indian population from serfdom and gave them the vote, distributed the land, and nationalised the tin mines that had dominated the economic life of the country since colonial times.

Céspedes was the most effective publicist of the Bolivian nationalist movement that emerged from the bitterness and discouragement which followed the defeat of the country in the Chaco war with Paraguay between 1932 and 1935.

The short stories of Céspedes's first book, *Sangre de Mestizos* (Mestizo Blood, 1936), now comprise a classic. The stories raised the issue of racial disparity as it was magnified by the extreme situations of war. Unlike *indigenista* fiction, Céspedes's book took for granted that the great majority of the population were Indian or of mixed blood, and not an object of literary curiosity. From this publication on, Céspedes had also found his voice: a lean, syncopated language, with strong, memorable images. His was the first truly mestizo literary voice in Bolivian literature.

It was as a journalist that Céspedes became both feared and celebrated for his mastery of invective and devastating wit. Such was his corrosive vein that he earned the nickname of *Chueco* (the twisted one). He was a founder and the main writer of La Calle, a daily which mixed campaigning journalism and satire in lethal dosage. It became the voice of the university lecturers and intellectuals who went on to found the MNR in 1941.

La Calle was a voice of Bolivian nationalism, which developed a distinct voice and set of ideas. Its main doctrine was the protection of national wealth from imperial rapacity and local potentates. Although left anti-imperialism was a mainstay, some of the leaders and intellectuals had had links with the near-fascist nationalism normally associated with Argentina's Juan Perón. This kind of pragmatic eclecticism would permeate the ideological outlook of the 1952 revolution.

Even though Céspedes had inherited the mantle of the main theoretician of the movement, Carlos Montenegro, author of *Nacionalismo y Coloniaje* (Nationalism and Colonial Practice, 1940), Céspedes was not a systematic essayist. Together with his journalism he contributed to the spirit of the age with a novel, *El metal del diablo* (The Devil's Metal, 1946). This is a satirical biography, thinly disguised as fiction, of Simón Patino, the Bolivian tin king who at his peak was one the world's 10 richest men. It is one of the best political novels of Latin American literature, and has been translated into many languages. His other novels — *Trópico enamorado* (1968), and *Las dos queridas del tirano* (1983) — never equalled the chaotic verve of this book.

> He had met, either as allies or enemies, everyone who was anyone in Bolivian life

But Céspedes's true claims to posterity are his historical chronicles. Starting with *El dictador suicida* (The Dictator who Committed Suicide, 1956) and *El presidente colgado* (The Hanged President, 1966), up to *Salamanca o el metafísico del fracaso* (Salamanca, or the Metaphysician of Failure, 1973), Céspedes wrote an extraordinary series that blends memoirs with history and journalism.

From his youth he was at the centre of Bolivian politics. In 1927 he founded the Partido Nacionalista, which immediately joined a government coalition. By 1936 he was made ambassador to Chile, and during his long life held several diplomatic posts: as ambassador to Paraguay in 1945, to France in 1964 and to Unesco in 1985-90. In 1938 he won his first election as a member of parliament, and was returned several times until the 1950s. In 1944 Céspedes was minister of the presidency.

It meant that he had met, as allies or enemies, everyone who was anyone in Bolivian life. From this vantage point he had inside information that was ruthlessly used in his historical chronicles. The first one deals with the presidency of Lieutenant Colonel Germán Busch (1937-1939), a young war hero who dashingly put power into the hands of the nationalist revolutionaries. It ends, melodramatically, with Busch's suicide, as the chronicle of Gualberto Villarroel's government (1943-46), another young military radical, would end with his hanging from a lamp-post outside the presidential palace. The last one, about president Daniel Salamanca (1931-1934), is a shorter work. The strength of the set-scenes, the vigour of the pen portraits, the bold, cutting quality of his prose recall the Duke of Saint-Simon's Mémoires and their pithy, bitter portrayal of Louis XIV's Versailles.

Like the Duke, Céspedes was a small man very much aware of his own worth. His boxer's nose, powerful jaw and deep eyes made him cut a remarkable figure, vaguely threatening. He was, however, open and generous with the younger generations, although he expected from them the same kind of unrelenting principles. For those who had a chance to hear him while he walked and talked under the pitiless sun and dry cold of La Paz's main boulevard, destroying the reputations of the stupid and the venal — except if they were, for a while, his friends — the qualities of his books were evident. The style was the man.

Hugo Estenssoro

Augusto Céspedes, writer and politician, born February 6, 1904; died May 11, 1997

Letters: Baroness Seear, Allen Ginsberg

Tom Smithies writes: A couple of years ago, I had to organise a training awards dinner, and had been desperately searching for a speaker when I heard Baroness Nancy Seear (*obituary April 25*) deliver a rousing speech, and she accepted a rather nervous invitation from me to be our speaker. She arrived at the dinner after a long working day, and courteously badgered people about their training. Towards the end of the meal, she declared she'd "better think of something worthwhile to say," scribbled down five key points and delivered a thunderous 15-minute speech on education and training. At 82 she held the rapt attention of the guests, mostly drunk financiers.

Paul Harris writes: Allen Ginsberg (*obituary April 7*) didn't father the beats or the hippies; he did what he wanted to do, which was write poetry, travel and explore the peoples and religions of the world. In his time the energy he evoked moved people and cultural boundaries. This is his legacy. This is what new readers will pick up on. This is why he will continue to change people's lives. He should not be remembered as an old guy with a beard, draped in the Stars and Stripes, but as a struggling, excitable Jewish-Russian wandering San Francisco searching for the voice that would shake America.

Birthdays

Sir Crispin Agnew, explorer and genealogist, 53; **Dirk Aldous**, chief constable, Dorset, 53; **William Allen**, deputy director, Bank of England, 49; **Clive Barnes**, drama critic, 70; **Luciano Benetton**, founder and president Benetton, 62; **Rosie Boycott**, editor, Independent on Sunday, 46; **Joe Brown**, singer, guitarist, 56; **Sir John Cope**, former Paymaster-General, 60; **Eileen Diss**, theatre, film and television designer, 66; **Jim Douglas**, jazz guitarist, 55; **Robert Earnshaw**, racehorse trainer, 38; **Colin Ford**, director, National Museum of Wales, 63; **Peter Gabriel**, singer, 47; **Dr Jane Glover**, conductor, 48; **Sir John Habakkuk**, former principal, Jesus College, Oxford, 82; **Tony Hide**, racehorse trainer, 58; **Harvey Keitel**, actor, 58; **Sir Laurence Kirwan**, archaeologist, 90; **Tasmin Little**, violinist, 32; **Sir Sydney Lipworth**, deputy chairman, National Westminster Bank, 66; **Richard Madeley**, broadcaster, 41; **Tim Pigott-Smith**, actor, 51; **Sir Alfred Pugsley**, civil engineer, 94; **Selina Scott**, television presenter, 46; **Helen Sharman**, astronaut, 34; **Gerry Sutcliffe**, Labour MP, 44; **Sir William Utting**, former chief inspector, Social Services Inspectorate, 66; **Zoe Wanamaker**, actress, 48; **Stevie Wonder**, singer, 46.

Death Notices

HAGGETT, Edna (née Scott), of Park Avenue, Crossgates, Leeds 15 widow of John G Haggett, much-loved mother of Paul and Diane, Kathy and Steve, and David and Fran, grandmother of Thomas and Laura died peacefully in hospital May 10th 1997. Funeral service to be held at Lawnswood Crematoria, Leeds 11am, Monday 19th May 1997. Details 0113 2452537. Family flowers only, donations in lieu to PLAN International UK reg charity no 276035

HEMMINGS - John F.W.J.J., Emeritus Professor of French, University of Leicester, peacefully in hospital on 9th May 1997. Dearly loved husband of Margaret, father of Ione and Julian. Funeral service and cremation, for family and friends, at Gilroes Cemetery, Leicester, on Friday 16 May at 2.30pm. Family flowers only please, donations if desired for the Leicestershire Red Cross, c/o Girling & Gutteridge funeral directors, of Leicester, tel. 0116 2518117

McCUSSIN, David Alexander OBE KHS, died peacefully at the home of his daughter on Saturday 10 May 1997. There will be a funeral mass at Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Church, Derby Road, Haslemere, Surrey at 1.00pm on Friday 16 May followed by interment at St. Joseph's Church, Grayshott, Hants. Family flowers only please. Donations if wished to Macmillan Services or Elizabeth Fitzroy Homes c/o Luff & Partners, 84 Lion Lane, Haslemere, Surrey.

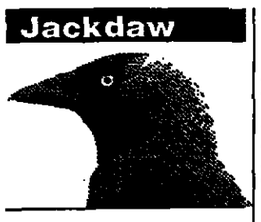
WENHAM, Brian George. Funeral 11.15am on Monday 19th May 1997 at St James Parish Church, Church Street, Weybridge. Flowers to F W Chitty and Co, 45 Elm Grove Road, Weybridge KT13 8PG Tel 01932 842220. All welcome. A memorial service will be held later in the year.

Births

SMITH-PARSONS. David and Sarah, a son William David, born Sheffield, Sunday, 11th May 1997. A first for them, and a first grandchild to the family

To place your announcement telephone 0171 713 4567 or fax 0171 713 4129 between 9am and 3pm Mon-Fri.

Jackdaw



Wishful thinking

AUSTRALIAN Fortean Pete Darben recently sent me some splendid advice from the 1742 Transactions Of the Royal Society entitled "Cautions in Viewing Objects" which contains wise words for anyone jumping to conclusions from a brief or prejudiced viewing of anything. "Beware of determining and declaring your opinion on any object; for imagination often gets the start of judgement and makes people believe they see things which better observations will convince them could not possibly be seen."

When looking at anything Fortean, or considering anyone else's sighting of things Fortean, it is well to bear these words in mind, we do ourselves no favours if, when trying to make sense of phenomena, we leave data littered with false information derived from misperceptions. *Fortean times on the risk of over-enthusiastic imaginations.*

Dog's dinner

Shakespeare was wrong: the food of love is not music but food itself. Certainly this is the case where animals are concerned. The best that a dewy eyed dog owner can do is to give his or her canine loved one something good to eat. It is an instinct all too easily abused by commerce. What is good to eat can be interpreted as what the dog likes to eat, or even what the owner quite fancies eating himself. They are not necessarily the same thing. Now comes the possibility that a dog has contracted BSE, perhaps from its food. The love that finds its only outlet through a tin of meaty chunks is not always perfectly served by pet food manufacturers. If only it were only meaty chunks. The £700 million a year dog food industry has been ingenious in convincing owners that it has harnessed "today's technology is for tomorrow's dogs". The simple promise that a product would Prolong Active Life has been superseded by a welter of pseudo science, assuring the consumer that it is "stablised with vitamin C and deodorase? What on earth is this process of stabilisation? And what is deodorase? Please do not tell us: we suspect we would rather not know. *Country Life on the best way to the heart of man's best friend.*

Home truths

YOU'VE got the career, the capital, the clothes. You're young, smart, sucessful, with a job that takes you around the world. Or perhaps you're a downsized ex-City high-flyer with a media-hub farmhouse and 100 acres in the Hereford hills? Either way, in nineties terms you're a success: upwardly mobile, technologically adept, envied by 95 per cent of the population, surfing the latest popular trends. You are, in short, *homo contemporaneus* . . . so why are you living like a peasant or a prole?

We like to imagine that what we admire in contemporary architecture, design and interior decor is a matter of personal taste. Of course we are vaguely aware that even our apparently individual tastes are to some extent conditioned by fashion. But despite the plethora of books and magazines on the subject, despite the Conran Shop and the Fulham Road, when it come to the stuff that surrounds us, our much trumpeted freedom of choice is absurdly limited.

Dubious? OK, just take a look around you. Maybe you've just fitted out a 3,000 square-foot ex-warehouse shell in up and coming Clerkenwell. You've taken the post-Pawson option — plenty of natural light, neutral colours, seamless walls, hidden cupboards filled with Catherine Memmi waffle-weaves, stainless steel work surfaces and industrial cookers and dishwashers massive enough to service 60 in a single sitting (and how many will be dining tonight? Er . . . two). You earn your living as a professional and you don't let that uppity little chap from the planning department forget it. So why do you live in a factory? How come you're white collar at work and blue collar at home? *Wallpaper argues the disappearance of the domestic servant has had a negative effect on how we furnish our homes.*

Ed would

WHAT does Sir Edward Heath want with Vinnie Jones of Wimbledon Football club? Or an ABBA biography? Or even a model of the Starship Enterprise? For all have a place in his Westminiser private office — the Vinnie Jones, in case of confusion, coming in a small plastic version of the type which hangs from car windows.

The trinkets, it emerges, are not entirely reliable clues to Heath's passions. "No, I don't think you could say Sir Edward was a big trekkie," is the offical line from his assistant. However, Sir Ted has had occasion, it seems, to comment favourably on Wimbledon's gradual move away from the long-ball game. Elsewhere in the office, there are better clues to Heath's interests, not to say obsessions. On one shelf sits a can of Bloody Mary mix, especially imported from America. Strange, Q thinks —

Q . . . political trinkets

it won't keep cold on the shelf — before noting the brand name. It's Mr & Mrs T Bloody Mary Mix. To add to the fun, a cartoon is pinned to the notice board, detailing a scene from an old folk's home. A woman of distinctive features — Mrs T again — grabs hold of another. "I was Prime Minister for 11 years," she insists, only to be humoured by the reply; "There are a lot of you in here."

How Heath must chuckle (inwardly, evidently) every time he enters the room, seeing his old adversary, Margaret Thatcher, reduced to a name on a can. *Q interviews Sir Edward Heath.*

Self help

"FOR god's sake leave me alone!" "Why the hell should I?" "What's it to me anyway?" That sort of unilateral declaration of indifference must be the starting point of nearly all family quarrels, and plenty of philosophical catastrophies as well. "Why should I always give way to other people? Am I my brother's keeper?" But eventually the question will be turned sarcastically back on you. "You think you're so special? The only pebble on the beach? It'll be a different story when it's just you that's run out of luck, just you wait and see."

This homely dialectical routine is, I suppose, the basis of all our traditions of moral education. Aristotle started from the premise that "the good man should be a lover of self," and Jesus took the next step with the injunction "Love thy neighbour as thyself".

In the begining — the assumption goes — you care for nobody except yourself; but then, all being well, your self-ishness will start to expand. *The art of selflessness, in the London Review of Books*

Jackdaw wants your jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4368; write Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Hannah Pool

Bug threatens nuclear sector, page 12

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance **Guardian**

A really classic case of Anglo-Saxon capitalism at its least edifying

Notebook

Alex Brummer

THE post-election period has produced an outbreak of merger/deal making fever. Some of the deals like ICI's purchase of Unilever's speciality chemicals business for £6 billion have emerged as the result of long-term planning at board level, with the help of management consultants about new directions and strategies. As such, it fits in with the UK's new self-image of a technologically based, high quality, high margin economy and represents best practice, even if risks have been taken with the balance sheet.

The proposed £20 billion merger between Guinness and Grand Metropolitan does not appear to pass this test. If the words of the two chairmen Tony Greener of Guinness and George Bull of GrandMet of the combined group, uncomfortably named GMG Brands, are to be taken at face value then the deal was stitched together over dinner at the Bull residence on April 10.

As the two men have known each other for 17 years, the result of friendly conflict around the world, shareholders — and a broader range of stakeholders — are meant to assume that such a deal must be the right way to proceed. Of course, it is not.

This is Anglo-Saxon capitalism at its least edifying: two companies which apparently have run out of ideas on how best to operate independently, frantically casting around for merger partners.

At a time when other corporate combinations, in a range of businesses, have sought to break them out into separate entities to focus on value and brand strengths, Guinness and GrandMet seem intent on moving in different directions.

Apart from expertise in branding and marketing it requires an enormous leap of imagination to believe that the same skills as are involved in marketing upscale products such as those in the Guinness spirits range, acquired in a bitterly fought takeover more than a decade ago really has that much in common with Burger King hamburgers or Pillsbury's toaster strudel business.

The person talking most sense is someone far removed from the Anglo-Saxon model: the chairman of the French luxury products group LVMH (Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton) currently the biggest shareholder in Guinness with 14.2 per cent of the equity, which will become among the largest holders in the new business with 6.6 per cent of the combined business.

If there is this much money around, why has it taken so long to share it?

It was LVMH's Bernard Arnault who voted against the deal at the Guinness board meeting proposing an intelligent, different approach in which the three wine and spirits business were spun off into a separate entity, in which existing shareholders would have been provided with stock. In many ways, this might have been the soundest solution to the international marketing and distribution difficulties in all three countries.

There would have been focused marketing and branding and common distribution channels through which all the products — most of them fairly upscale — could have been funnelled providing a genuine European challenge to North American competitors like Seagram. It could have operated as a world class company and perhaps commanded the kind of stock market premium that successful demerged companies ranging from Zeneca to EMI have been able to deliver.

It is interesting to note that the master of value investment, Warren Buffett, has scored his main successes by investing in strong branded good companies — not anonymous conglomerates like GMG Brands.

One of the attractions of this deal to shareholders is the discovery by the combined boards that, with the two balance sheets, there is some £2.4 billion which can be distributed to shareholders in the shape of what is termed a capital repayment. This begs a number of questions.

If there is so much money sloshing around in the balance sheet, why has it taken the directors of the respective groups so long to share it with their ultimate owners through the more conventional means of share-buy backs and special dividends?

Alternatively having decided on a merger would it not have been better to keep some of the cash back, particularly at a time when global interest rates are rising, so as to re-invest in the business, rather than persuade institutions to sell-up.

Among the virtues of the deal, are the proposed cost savings. The detail on where these are coming from is thin on the ground, although 2,000 jobs have been mentioned.

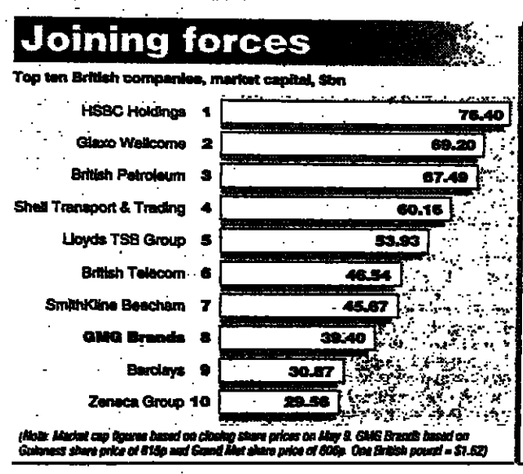
However, the immediate benefit to the bottom line is a long way off at around £175 million, in the third year of trading beyond the merger. That is an awfully long time to wait for cost efficiencies which are often more difficult to deliver post merger than in the heat of a takeover, as has been amply demonstrated at the combined Granada-Forte group.

It may be, of course, that scrutiny by the competition authorities both here in Europe and abroad, could change the economics of this transaction. In many ways, it will be the first test of Labour's approach to competition policy. We have already seen its commitment to economic stability through the reform of monetary policy: now the Government has a chance to test its commitment to long-termism in the corporate sphere.

LVMH vows to wreck marriage plans

Joining forces

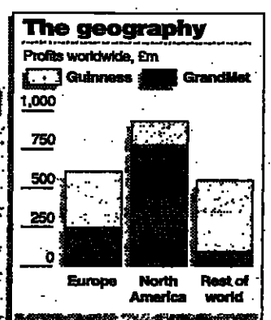
Top ten British companies, market capital, $bn



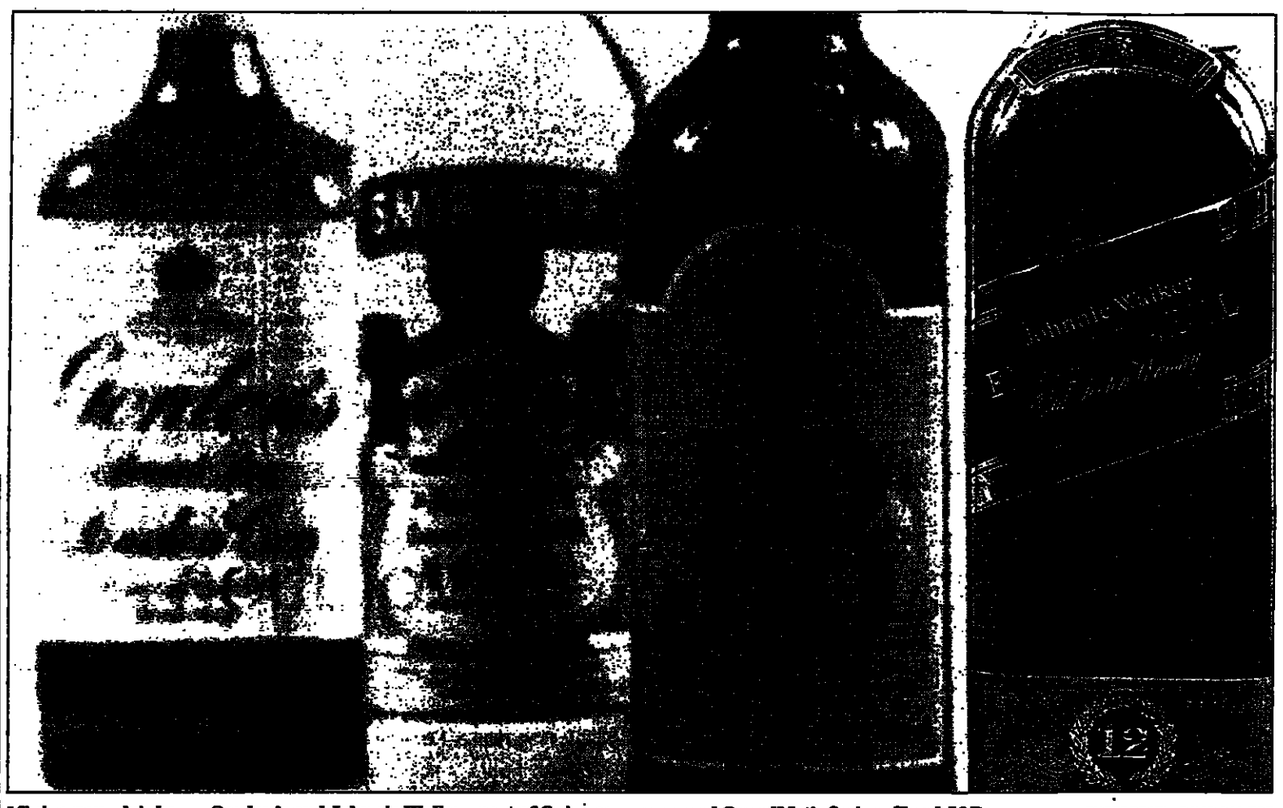
(Note: Market cap figures based on closing share prices on May 9. GMG Brands based on Guinness share price of 615p and Grand Met share price of 606p. One British pound = $1.62)

The geography

Profits worldwide, £m



- £12.9bn Turnover
- £2.2bn Profit before interest/tax
- £0.9bn Free cash flow
- £1.3bn Spirits and wine profit before interest/tax



Mixing your drinks . . . Gordon's and Johnnie Walker, part of Guinness group, and GrandMet's Smirnoff and J&B PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

Guinness deal sign of weakness, say French

The merger

Paul Murphy

LVMH, the French luxury goods group, yesterday declared its intention to wreck the proposed marriage of Guinness and Grand Metropolitan.

Its chairman, Bernard Arnault — a Guinness director for nearly a decade — voted against the the plan to create GMG Brands, suggesting instead that the drinks businesses of GrandMet, Guinness and LVMH might be merged and then listed as a separate company.

Yesterday, a spokesman for LVMH — which is best known for its Louis Vuitton leather bags and Dior fragrances as well as Moët Hennessy — confirmed that the group would use its 14.2 per cent stake in Guinness to try to block the deal.

Mr Arnault is said to have been outraged at the short notice received. Like other non-executive board members, he learnt about the planned merger a fortnight before yesterday's announcement.

LVMH is now set to become a rallying post for any institutional shareholders who are unsure about the tie up, while Mr Arnault can be expected to be feted by food and drinks companies that might be considering a counter-bid for GrandMet or Guinness.

"This is like the other lover turning up at the church, telling blue tales. However lovely the union might appear, everyone just has to stop and listen," noted one analyst.

The Guinness and GrandMet teams did their best to play down the row yesterday. Philip Yea, Guinness finance director, said the 50-50 Moët Hennessy joint distribution venture between his company's spirits division, United Distillers, and LVMH was unaffected by the merger with GrandMet, and that any changes would be negotiated through the usual channels.

On the subject of Mr Arnault's dissent, the chairman of Guinness, Tony Greener, simply said that "businessmen do have different points of view", adding that "it is not unknown for the English to have one point of view and the French to have another."

"Let me assure you that there has not been any sort of row between ourselves and LVMH," Mr Greener said. "We have had a number of very commercial, professional and sensible discussions about this. There is no doubt that there is an alternative solution that Bernard Arnault would prefer."

But it remained unclear last night just how much longer Mr Arnault would continue to serve on the Guinness board.

Yesterday, neither GrandMet nor Guinness were willing to give any assurance that Mr Arnault would even be invited to join the new company's board.

Referring to the stated cost savings that GrandMet and Guinness hope to achieve through the merger, one of Mr Arnault's associates said: "Saving £175 million is no rationale for rushing headlong into a £20 billion merger. This is a defensive move by both companies. In fact, it seems fair to suggest that both GrandMet and Guinness are now in play."

In the stock market, brokers confirmed that the 16 per cent rise in Guinness shares, up 84p at 600½p, and the 15 per cent advance in GrandMet stock, 76½p higher at 591½p, reflected speculation that the whole of the drinks sector might be plunged into an orgy of takeover bid and counter-bid.

Analysts also mused on whether, if the GrandMet/Guinness merger goes ahead, LVMH will choose to keep its remaining drinks interests. Earlier this year, LVMH sold a third of its stake in Guinness, raising around £600 million.

Red tape will delay the final union

The deal

Paul Murphy

A STRING of regulatory hurdles and corporate technicalities make it unlikely the union between GrandMet and Guinness will be consummated before the end of the year.

While both parties are confident they will not meet any serious resistance from the monopoly authorities, they accept that "certain issues have to be addressed".

First, however, two sets of shareholders are being asked to vote on a deal which will see Guinness first being renamed GMG Brands and then shareholders in GrandMet being offered shares in the new entity on a one-for-one basis. GrandMet holders will account for 53 per cent of the merged group, with Guinness shareholders speaking for the remainder.

Both sets of shareholders are then being promised a cash repayment worth £2.4 billion. So as to avoid tax problems, the payment will take the form of a new class of shares — redeemable "B" stock worth 60p a share.

About 2,000 of the 20,000 jobs within the merged spirits division, United Distillers & Vintners, are set to go, although few job losses are expected in the other three planned divisions — Pillsbury, the US food business, Burger King and Guinness Brewing Worldwide. The merged group will employ 85,000 worldwide.

Cost savings of £175 million are envisaged over three years, though little of this is likely to be seen within the first 12 months.

Pro forma figures for the new group point to an entity with a turnover of £13 billion, half the revenue coming from spirits and wines and another £2.2 billion from brewing. Before interest and tax, the merged businesses would have produced profits of £2.2 billion last year.

Until George Bull, chairman of GrandMet, retires next year, the merged board will be chaired on a rotational basis by Mr Bull and Guinness's Tony Greener. GrandMet's John McGrath is set to become group chief executive, with Finn Johnsson of Guinness acting as his deputy.

The finance director will be Philip Yea of Guinness.

GrandMet released interim results yesterday, showing profits up 3.5 per cent to £471 million in the six months to end-March. The recent strength of sterling cost GrandMet £30 million.

The deals

Post-election activity

Wednesday, May 7:
ICI buys Unilever's speciality chemicals division for £4.9 billion; Sells £3 billion industrial chemicals business

Friday, May 9:
Siebe engineering group bids £327 million for rival firm APV

Monday, May 12:
GrandMet and Guinness announce merger to form GMG Brands, valued at £20.6 billion.

Keeping spirits up by banding together in a global assault

Outlook

Sarah Ryle and Lisa Buckingham

JAPANESE tourists visit Buckingham Palace and buy whisky. It is a well-known marketing fact.

But despite the popularity of traditional Scotch blends in the Far East, the spirits market is a problem — at least as far as the mainstream producers like Guinness, Grand Metropolitan and Allied Domecq are concerned.

The main players in the market have been forced to accept that people are drinking less — but they noted that quality was an increasingly valuable selling point. This was especially apparent in Japan where the demand for 12-year-old whisky was established by the early 1990s.

The world-wide recession, however, took its toll: Japanese expense accounts took a hit and by 1993 whisky drinking had fallen sharply in the UK. Campaigns are now being aimed at the young and at women, a reflection of their increasing spending power.

Guinness may have a growing share of the market for branded alcohol in the developing world (it made just under £500 million from the region in 1995/96) but even Guinness has found it difficult to make inroads into areas like Asia and Latin America. Local producers have reportedly smartened up their act and can undercut the international big boys in terms of price.

Guinness knows that globally, the merger with GrandMet will still represent just 5 per cent of the market, or about 100 million cases. Not quite the 10 or 15 per cent they have been talking about in recent years.

The global population slugs back the equivalent of 2.2 billion cases of spirits each year but probably more than half of that is poor quality, locally made produce that in most people's estimation is undrinkable.

It is one of those marketing truths that the benefit of throwing money at brands is not always provable. But it is all too clear that there are losses when the money is not spent. Guinness may have come around to this idea later than GrandMet. But it has embraced the idea more readily than many others.

With the addition of Guinness — brewed in 50 countries, sold in 150 countries and with profits from American bar sales up by 30 per cent last year — the group will pose a formidable force.

The new business for spirits and wines, UDV, would have traded 109 million cases of spirits in 1995 against 47 million by Allied Domecq — due to announce interim profits todayand 41 million cases by Seagram.

That translated to £1.3 billion in profit before interest and tax, compared to £419 million for Allied Domecq and £421 million for Seagram.

This has sparked market speculation that Allied Domecq must seek a partner to take on the might of the new giant on the block.

Bringing in the food element, both Guinness and GrandMet stand to gain from each other's success in different parts of the world.

GrandMet is stronger than Guinness in North America but, despite Guinness' lengthy period of share price underperformance, Guinness is stronger than GrandMet in Europe and the rest of the world.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.088	France 8.92	Italy 2.850	Singapore 2.274
Austria 16.837	Germany 2.65	Malta 0.601	South Africa 7.017
Belgium 54.78	Greece 426.75	Netherlands 2.369	Spain 222.90
Canada 2.20	Hong Kong 12.20	New Zealand 2.263	Sweden 12.112
Cyprus 0.809	India 58.08	Norway 11.037	Switzerland 2.237
Denmark 10.18	Ireland 1.032	Portugal 267.00	Turkey 215,200
Finland 8.084	Israel 5.80	Saudi Arabia 5.977	USA 1.585

Supplied by Rathbot Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel)

Arrogant and offhand, but a fine record of making profits

Greener

TONY GREENER, left, known as the "smooth head of Guinness" is, like the drink, not to everone's taste, *writes Tony May.*

One leading analyst said recently of the heir apparent at GMG Brands: "He is arrogant, offhand and lacks interpersonal skills. He stands out in this sector as particularly unapproachable."

Mr Greener, 56, joined Guinness in 1986 as a non-executive director, just before the Ernest Saunders share scandal erupted.

He was one of the triumvirate who took over the company and turned the distillers division around. He became chief executive of Guinness, before being made chairman in 1993.

He had come a long way. On the strength of one A level and experience in his father's cotton business, he progressed though 12 years at Unilever to Dunhill, the luxury goods company whose profits soared from £15 million to £350 million with his help.

His task at Guinness was to leave the era of acquisitions behind and focus on organic growth.

The group was persistently underperforming the stock market and even a £50 million share buy back early last year failed to do the trick. He ruled out a demerger of spirits business, which provides about 75 per cent of the group's £1 billion-plus profit, and was left with the idea of merging with GrandMet.

Grasping the opportunity has been arguably his greatest moment.

'Just a liquor salesman' joins equal partnership

Bull

GEORGE BULL, above right, is credited with having put GrandMet's house in order over the past 18 months, *writes Tony May.*

His predecessor, Lord Sheppard, left him with a sprawling conglomerate which underperformed the stock market. Under Mr Bull it has been trimmed back to a merely vast group which is focused on its international brands.

He is an old friend of Guinness chairman Tony Greener, and their personal trust is seen as a key factor in putting the deal together in one month without major argument.

The deal was essentially hatched on April 10 at a West End hotel, when Mr Bull had dinner with Mr Greener and suggested an alliance.

He is a marketeer who espouses spending to support brands. He is clearly behind the idea of merging the two drinks companies to counter the increasingly dominant supermarkets.

After July next year, Mr Bull, already "ex-Ampleforth and ex-Guards", will also be ex-GrandMet when he will be 62.

He claimed at the time of his accession that he was a terrible strategist and called himself "just a liquor salesman".

But yesterday Mr Greener credited him and his team with revitalising GrandMet in the eyes of the City and with getting the shares re-rated. This is seen as a vital foundation for yesterday's "partnership of equals".

But despite their friendship, Mr Bull is going to need all his diplomatic skills as he shares the chairmanship of the new group with his reputedly abrasive old friend.

Governor upbeat on controlling inflation

Richard Thomas
Economics Correspondent

THE Governor of the Bank of England, Eddie George, sounded an upbeat note on inflation yesterday with the release of figures showing price tags on factory goods rising at the slowest rate for more than a decade.

Speaking ahead of meetings in Switzerland with central bankers from the G-10 group of industrialised nations, Mr George said there was a "better than even" chance of hitting the Government's 2.5 per cent target for inflation this year.

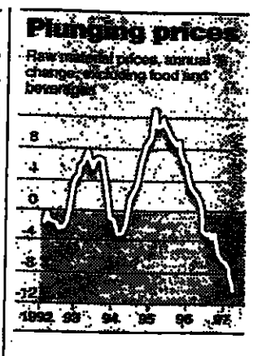
The Governor's comments eased fears that the Bank would immediately use its newly independent status to push up base rates from their current 6.25 per cent level.

City analysts said fresh evidence of subdued inflationary pressure in the manufacturing sector would add to pressure for a holding policy from the Bank, especially if the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, also delivers a tax-raising summer budget.

Simon Briscoe, UK economist at brokers Nikko Europe, said: "In such an environment it is hard to see the Bank of England, despite its new independence, aggressively tightening interest rates."

According to the Office for National Statistics, the price of manufactured products rose by 0.8 per cent over the year to April, down from a 1 per cent rate of increase in the preceding month — and the lowest annual rate since September 1986. It said the output figures reflected a sharp fall in the cost of raw materials, with input prices dropping by a sharp 1.9 per cent between March and April and by 10.5 per cent over the year, the biggest fall since November 1986.

But analysts said the ONS data also highlighted the slump in the factory sector, in contrast with a strong upturn in service-driven firms.



Geoffrey Dicks, chief economist at NatWest Markets, said: "This is something of a mixed blessing for the economy and policy-makers, as weak factory gate inflation is a testament to the pressures that a strong pound is exerting on the tradeable goods sector."

Separate data from the British Retail Consortium showed brisk activity on the high street, with food, drink, computers and games consoles leading the surge. The BRC said sales in April were 4.1 per cent up on the same month last year, against a rise of 3.7 per cent in March.

Andrew Sentance, economic adviser to the BRC, said the strong activity might peter out later in the year. "How the consumer recovery develops in the second half of the year will hinge on future interest rate decisions, the shape of the Chancellor's first budget and consumers' willingness to spend windfall gains from building society conversions.".

The ONS said that stripping out volatile goods — food, drink, alcohol and tobacco — pushed down the rate of output price inflation still further, to 0.5 per cent over the year to April.

Rock and rolling stock

Puffer fan . . . In a reprise of his advertisement for the state-owned British Rail, Sir Jimmy Savile at King's Cross celebrates yesterday's first birthday of GNER PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

Railtrack lines up £580m upgrade for London commuters

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

RAILTRACK yesterday lifted the lid on a £580 million investment that will extend the rail network in a 50-mile radius around London, providing new stations and faster services and considerably easing commuter congestion.

Over the next six months, more than 60 local authorities from Norfolk to West Sussex will be consulted on the Thameslink 2000 project, which is designed to increase rush-hour services across London from eight to 24 trains an hour.

There will be longer trains and more destinations on the existing north-south route from Bedford to Brighton.

Government approval will have to be obtained after a planning inquiry, and a new extended station will be built at Blackfriars. In addition, the King's Cross Thameslink station will be replaced by a new station under neighbouring St Pancras as part of the work to accommodate Eurostar services between London and Paris when the new Channel tunnel rail link is completed.

Gil Howarth, Railtrack's director of major projects, said that existing services would be complemented by routes serving Peterborough, Cambridge, King's Lynn, Ashford, Dartford and Horsham.

The need for extensive electrification, signalling and track improvements means that the work will not start until 2000 and be completed by 2004.

In a separate move yesterday, the out-going Conservative government was attacked by one of the privatised rail operators for producing a system of contracts "which is so complex that I must admit that I don't fully understand it".

The operator, James Sherwood, president of Sea Containers, which owns the Great North Eastern Railway, said he hoped that the Labour Government would allow the industry to improve the railroad without being shackled.

Reporting on its first year of private operation, GNER's chief executive, Christopher Garnett, said passengers were up by 7 per cent from 10.8 million to 11.6 million, but that it could not invest in the future without the promise of an extension to its seven-year franchise due to finish in six years.

While Railtrack will fund some of its station improvements, there is considerable investment to be made. It has cut the single fare between London and Scotland to £19, although British Rail's Apex return fare of £40 was almost comparable.

The company wants to invest in eight new tilting trains at a cost of £120 million, but is not prepared to make that kind of commitment if it does not get its extension. It says it cannot afford to be complacent, because its subsidy of £180 million is due to decline to zero over the period of the seven-year franchise.

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INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Millennium bug 'poses threat to nuclear sector'

Nicholas Bannister
Technology Editor

THE millennium bug will affect nuclear power and weapons systems in countries that cannot afford to eliminate it, according to the chief of Britain's Computer Services and Software Association.

However, Tony Lewis, the executive director of CSSA, said the nuclear problem was not confined to the poorer nations. Three Mile Island, the nuclear power plant responsible for America's biggest nuclear incident in 1978, was going to test its new software live, he said.

The bug, which will throw many computer systems into confusion when the year 2000 is reached, is also embedded in computer chips in cars and satellites, he said. And it could bring lifts and air conditioning systems to a halt.

"Telephones may not work, alarms may not go off, traffic lights may not work," he warned.

He said some airlines were planning not to fly as the millennium dawned because of doubts about air traffic control and navigation systems.

"About 80 per cent of the world's aircraft are in the air at any one time," he said. "There is not enough space to put them all on the ground."

Mr Lewis's warning came as the Government's Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency published six booklets containing a comprehensive set of guidelines for tackling the year 2000 problem. Most computer software uses the last two digits to indicate the year, and will therefore interpret 00 as the year 1900 rather than 2000 unless amended. This could cause important files to be wiped out and whole systems to crash.

The CCTA yesterday warned that company directors risked losing their homes if they failed to tackle the millennium problem adequately.

The legal booklet says that directors could become personally liable for losses caused by a failure to deal with the problem.

It says the courts might conclude that directors had failed in their fiduciary duty towards their shareholders by not taking the necessary action.

If that proved to be the case, the directors would be personally liable for any losses suffered by shareholders — in theory, like Lloyd's Names, down to their last cuff-links.

Greenwich Building Society agrees takeover by Portman

Teresa Hunter

GREENWICH Building Society's 32,000 customers will receive bonuses averaging about £200 in July if plans for a takeover by Britain's 10th largest society, the Portman, are approved.

The plan, announced last night, marks a further consolidation in the building society world, which will see many of its main players such as the Halifax and Woolwich become banks later this year. However, pay-outs to Greenwich members will be much lower than typical windfalls distributed as a result of stock market flotations.

The Greenwich's decision to hand over its £200 million of assets and seven branches to a larger competitor could trigger copycat mergers as smaller mutuals consider their options for the future.

Portman chief executive Ken Culley said: "It is going to get difficult for smaller societies to compete in the future. Both the Portman and the Greenwich want to make sure that a strong and competitive building society sector continues to play an important role in the world of personal finance."

Greenwich managing director Robin Nichols, who will join the Portman as an executive director, said: "I am confident that this merger will be in the best long-term interests of our members and staff."

Members will be asked to approve the plan at a meeting on June 17, with the merger proceeding on July 30. Greenwich savers will receive 5 per cent of their balances up to a maximum bonus of £2,500, with payouts averaging about £200. Borrowers will receive £200 for each mortgage.

The combined business will have assets worth about £4.3 billion.

News in brief

Ofwat cracks down on leaky suppliers

WATER regulator Ian Byatt is planning a crackdown on water companies, which are allowing millions of gallons of water a day to be wasted through leaks. He said yesterday he was planning financial penalties for companies that failed to meet their leakage repair targets.

At the same time, Thames Water, which has the worst leakage record of all 10 privatised water companies, announced that it would repair leaks between the mains and a customer's house free of charge.

The water companies have frequently complained that part of their poor leakage record stems from burst or leaking pipes on customers' premises for which they are not responsible.

Figures released by Ofwat last month revealed that Thames was losing 38.6 per cent of its treated water through leakage, way above the industry average of 29 per cent. The watchdog believes that up to a third of all leaks occur between the main and the home.

Thames said that unprecedented low rainfall had made it essential for it to "step up our efforts to repair leaks on the householders' side of the supply boundary free of charge."

The company will announce full details of the scheme next month. — *Nicholas Bannister*

Unions sign Blue Circle deal

A THREE-year "partnership" deal, trading flexibility for job security and marginal above-inflation pay rises, was signed yesterday between four trade unions and the country's largest cement maker, Blue Circle Cement, a subsidiary of BCI.

Under the agreement, which follows an increasingly common pattern in manufacturing, BCC's 2,000 workers will get annual wage increases of 0.25 per cent above the rate of inflation and a no-compulsory redundancy guarantee until the year 2000.

In exchange, the unions have agreed to a voluntary redundancy programme, teamworking, benchmarking and flexibility arrangements to slash costs by £10 million a year at the company's 11 UK sites.

Allan Black, national secretary of the GMB general union, hailed the deal — which has been backed by a ballot of members — as the "shape of future industrial relations" in Britain. Ian McKenzie, chief executive of BCC, praised the unions' "positive and co-operative spirit". — *Seumas Milne*

Argos slips on profit warning

MORE than £164 million was wiped off the value of Argos's shares yesterday after the catalogue retailer issued its second profits warning this year.

The group's shares fell 4 per cent after chairman Richard Lloyd warned shareholders at the AGM that first-half results were "unlikely to match" those for the corresponding period of 1996, following an increase in printing charges and the cost of setting up new operations in the UK and Holland.

He said profits would improve in the second half, as sales in the 18 weeks since the start of the financial year were up by 12 per cent.

The shares ended the day down 24½p at 623p. — *Tony May*

Tarmac board wins 40pc rise

THE board of Tarmac received a collective pay rise last year of 40 per cent to £2.01 million, including pension payments, according to its annual report, published yesterday.

The total remuneration of Neville Simms, the chairman, rose from £480,000 to £563,000.

During the year, which also saw the group integrate the former Wimpey minerals and construction business, and divest itself of the Tarmac Housing business to Wimpey, the number of employees in the group jumped from 4,631 to 7,305, while the total wage bill rose from £425.2 million to £523.1 million. — *Tony May*

Vodafone network crash

PART of Vodafone's mobile phone network crashed yesterday leaving thousands of customers unable to make or receive calls. The company blamed a software problem in its computer system and said last night that it had been "fully sorted". The group, which has about 2.8 million customers, said that between 3 and 4 per cent had been affected. — *Nicholas Bannister*

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هكذا من الأجمل

Rugby League

Saints in strife over Sculthorpe

Paul Fitzpatrick on why St Helens had to deny an attempt to trade Bobbie Goulding

ST HELENS last night denied offering their captain Bobbie Goulding to Warrington in a possible exchange package for two players, Paul Sculthorpe, the Great Britain second-row forward, and Lee Briers, the young scrum-half who joined Wolves from Saints only four weeks ago.

Warrington claimed that Saints' inspirational scrum-half Goulding had been suggested along with Steve Prescott, Chris Morley, Dean Bobby and Kevin O'Loughlin.

But David Howes, the St Helens chief executive, said: "The grapevine was alive with reports last week that Sculthorpe was unsettled and that Wigan had made a bid.

"As an ambitious club, we made an inquiry to see if Sculthorpe was available. We were told quickly and firmly by Warrington's chairman Peter Higham that Sculthorpe had four years to run on his contract and was not available. We regarded the matter as closed.

"We stress that at no time was our captain Bobbie Goulding mentioned in any potential exchange. The recent sale of Bobbie's deputy Lee Briers to Warrington emphasises the key role he [Goulding] has at our club."

Wolves are determined to keep Sculthorpe, who played in all five Tests for Great Britain on their South Pacific tour last year and is now justly rated one of the best back-rows in the business. And they see Briers, a clever goalkicking scrum-half, as an integral part of their rebuilding plans.

Wolves "have no intention of losing Paul Sculthorpe or Lee Briers". Higham said yesterday, and he criticised St Helens' approach. "We are not happy with the way they are operating," he said. "It was ridiculous the way they handled the Iestyn Harris saga before he joined Leeds. There is no way we are going to have a repeat."

Andy Hay has joined Leeds from Sheffield in a deal worth about £70,000. The 23-year-old former Castleford back-row is the fourth Sheffield player to move to Headingley since Gary Hetherington left the Eagles to become the Rhinos' chief executive in October. Richie Eyres, the former Great Britain second-row, has gone in the opposite direction on loan with a view to a permanent move.

Hay looks a good signing for the resurgent Rhinos, in third place in Super League after Sunday's impressive win at Salford. "Hay represents another piece in the jigsaw," said Dean Bell, the Leeds coach.

Wigan Warriors have denied a report that they will move in permanently with Bolton Wanderers at the soccer club's new stadium in Horwich.

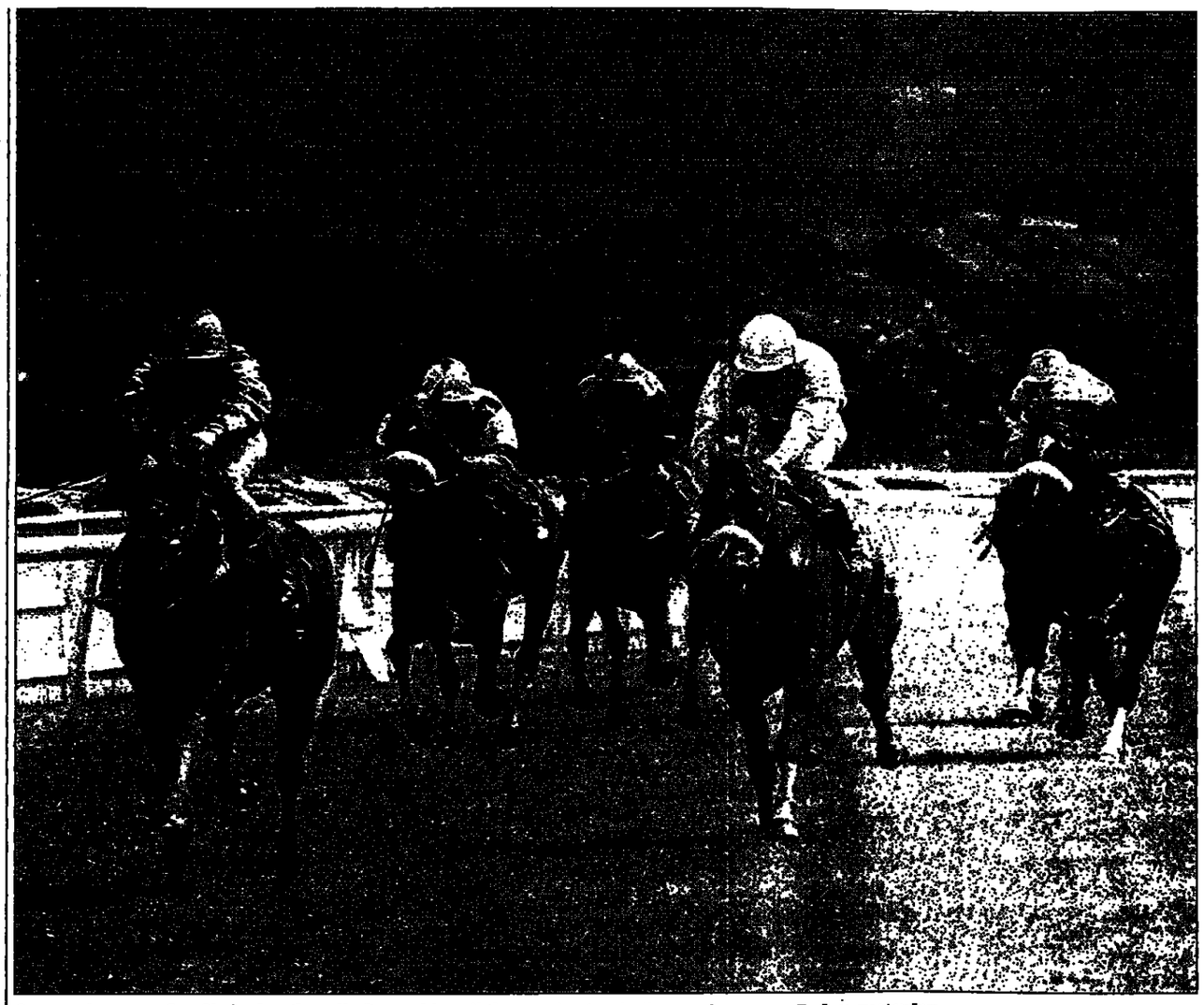
"It's the dirty-tricks brigade at it again," said the Wigan chairman Jack Robinson. "I don't know how many times we have to go on record and say we are being resited in the Wigan area, but that's the truth of the situation."

Wigan may have the services of their former forward Denis Betts in time for their World Club Championship campaign, which opens in Brisbane in June. Betts, who has signed a four-year £1 million deal with Wigan starting next season, may negotiate an early release from his contract with Auckland Warriors.

John Monie, the former Wigan coach who recently resigned at Auckland, has rejected an offer to take over the vacant Paris post. "I want to coach again," he said, "and I will return to England if there is a job. It's a bit of a closed shop in Australia at present."

Terry O'Connor, the Wigan prop, has ankle-ligament damage and has withdrawn from the Ireland side to meet France at the Bondoufle Stadium in Paris tonight.

The game in Wales has been relaunched with the establishment of the Cardiff Rugby League Academy.



One way home . . . One Singer has the call after making all the running to win the opening race at Redcar yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD RAYNER

Verse can follow Cecil script

Chris Hawkins

YORK'S May meeting starts today featuring the Oaks trial, the Tattersalls Musidora Stakes, and there are no prizes for guessing which trainer has the best recent record in the race.

Henry Cecil has won it five times in the last 10 years and will be fielding a short-priced favourite this afternoon in Reams Of Verse.

Only Entice and Noisette look likely to attract rival support in the betting and on form Reams Of Verse (3.10) has obvious claims.

She won three of her four races last season, finishing with victory in the Ascot Fillies' Mile beating, among others, the unlucky-in-running Sleepytime and the previously undefeated Red Camellia.

On her reappearance she was sixth in the 1,000 Guineas, lacking the pace to make her presence felt but, on the strength of what the bookmakers saw as a promising performance by a staying filly, she was made favourite for the Oaks.

As she needed a mile as a two-year-old it is fair to assume that the trip is too short for her this season. Today's extended mile and a quarter should be ideal as she is a half-sister to the 10-furlong specialist Elmaamul. But with the miler Nureyev, whose progeny have an average winning distance of 7.8 furlongs, as her sire she is no certainty to get a mile and a half.

Noisette, trained by John Gosden, drifted out from 6-1 to 11's at Ascot last month but this did not stop her winning impressively.

As the second Flamboyance had won her only previous race on the all-weather at Wolverhampton and the third, Delilah, is a maiden, it is hard to assess Noisette but being by Nashwan out of a Northern Dancer mare who stayed 10 furlongs, she could well develop into a leading Oaks fancy.

Entice was with Barry Hills last season but is now a member of the Godolphin team with Saeed bin Suroor.

She won twice as a juvenile and the form of her neck victory over Fahris at Pontefract, although looking nothing special at the time, now reads very well.

Michael Stoute relies on the once-raced Society Rose who won a Newcastle maiden by four lengths in October.

Like so many horses under modern training methods — which make a punter's and tipster's job well-nigh impossible — she is an unknown quantity but on the face of it has plenty of improvement to find.

The meeting opens with the Yorkshire Life Magazine handicap in which Remaadi Sun (2.05) is trying to repeat last year's victory. He is 6lb higher in the ratings now but ran encouragingly when a neck second to Polar Champ in soft ground at Doncaster last week.

Luca Cumani may not be the "handicap king" of former years but his runners in such events must always be respected and his Silverani (2.35) could be the answer to the Shepherd Trophy.

Silverani's jockey, Frankie Dettori, should not be far away on Dashing Blue (3.40) in the Stanley Racing Handicap.

This gelding finished strongly when a neck second to Averti at Bath but a case can be made for any number of his opponents in a tough-looking contest.

Ladbrokes have cut Benny The Dip from 9-2 to 7-2 favourite for tomorrow's Grosvenor Casinos Dante Stakes, the Gosden-trained colt having ousted the original market leader Desert Story who is out to 4-1.

Monza, a big disappointment in the Craven Stakes, would be an appropriate winner as he is owned by Robert Sangster whose Manton training operation is sponsored by Grosvenor Casinos, but this colt is rated a 10-1 chance.

Pat Eddery has decided not to appeal against the five-day ban due to start on May 20 which was imposed on him by the Bath stewards on Sunday.

● Branston Abby, the record-breaking mare who retired last year after winning 24 races, was put down yesterday after failing to get over an acute bout of grass sickness.

Rugby Union

England turn to new locks

ENGLAND may start their tour of Argentina on Sunday with only one survivor from the four lock forwards originally selected.

Bath's Martin Haag is fit to travel but Martin Bayfield, Northampton's former Lion, and Sale's John Fowler have withdrawn with a groin injury and knee ligament damage respectively, and there are doubts over the fitness of Newcastle's Gareth Archer.

Sale's Dave Baldwin and Coventry's Danny Grewcock have been drafted into the squad, which now contains 16 uncapped players, and Archer will see a specialist today after the recurrence of a neck injury sustained playing for England A three months ago.

Philippe Sella will captain a powerful World XV against Wasps, the English champions, in the Sanyo Cup match at Twickenham on Saturday week.

The squad contains two World Cup-winning captains in South Africa's Francois Pienaar and Fiji's sevens specialist Waisale Serevi. The Australia wing David Campese will make positively his final Twickenham appearance, in a team coached by his former Wallaby mentor Bob Dwyer, now director of rugby at Leicester.

Wasps, who are supplying several players to various summer tours beginning this month, will be reinforced by other guest appearances.

● The former All Black Frano Botica will make his World Cup debut on Saturday, 10 years after collecting a winners' medal. Llanelli's fly-half, who was a non-playing member of New Zealand's winning squad in 1987, will represent Croatia in the Europe Pool Two qualifying match against Latvia. He qualifies through his paternal grandfather.

● Marika Vunibaka, who scored 12 tries for Fiji when they won the sevens World Cup in Hong Kong, is one of four Fijians in the Barbarians' squad for the Middlesex Sevens at Twickenham on Saturday.

WORLD XV SQUAD: P Sella (capt), A Benazzi, O Reumaut, J-M Gonzalez (all France), D Campese, W Ofahengaue (both Australia), E Rush, J Kirwan, G Bachop, J Joseph (all New Zealand), W Serevi (Fiji), L Arbizu (Argentina), T van Rensberg, J Dalton, B Swart, N Strydom, D Theron, F Pienaar (all South Africa), N Popplewell (Ireland), Y Yoshida (Japan).

Chepstow (N.H.) runners and riders

	RON COX	TOP FORM
1-141	Blade Of Fortune	Apache Park
2-201	Thermal Warrior	Thermal Warrior
3-P55	Diwali Dancer	El Don
3-P5	Earthmover (bb)	Earthmover
4-P55	Calgary Girl (nap)	Red Tel
4-P5	Red Branch	Seek The Faith
4-55	The Village Way	—

Oval 2m circuit with 24Dyds run in. Testing, with five fences in home straight.
Going: Good ★ Denotes blinkers
Long distance travellers: 3.55 Cullin Caper, T Watson N Yorks 218 miles. 3.25 Corner Boy, L Dawson Lincs 196 miles. 1.50 Above The Clouds, Miss A Newton-Smith E Sussex 165 miles. 2.55 El Don, M Pipe Newmarket 164 miles.
Seven day winners: 2.55 Lord McMurrough.
Bikkered first time: 1.50 Minnsaen; 3.55 Red Tel.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F,Flat.

1.50 STIRRUP CUP NOVICE CLAIMING HURDLE
2m 110yds £2,198 (15 declared)

1 FB Bobbyston (BBR) D Pleach Dyas 5-11-9 ..... S McNeill
2 P/P0P0P Bella (IRE) J Neville 7-11-6 ..... A P McCoy
3 6P0P10 Harmonic (BB) P Farrell 7-11-2 ..... T Dascombe
4 0P0-P4 Red Viper (BF) N Langsad 5-11-2 ..... Mr L Baker (7)
5 30P-0P Lewis Lyn (IRE) B De Haan 7-11-0 ..... G Tobin
6 P0P-0P Lewis Of Fortune (BF) V Greatrex 9-10-13 ..... Mr J Tizzard (7)
7 /P-2/1 Bella Bandalore (IRE) A Hobbs 7-10-13 ..... R Supple (7)
8 0/ Baden Account (IRE) A Newcombe 8-10-11 ..... Mr P O'Keeffe (7)
9 0/P Above The Clouds (BF) A M Newton-Smith 6-10-10 ..... D J Burchell
10 4P1-P6 Apache Park (BF) (D) (BF) D Bechell 4-10-8 ..... S Durrough
11 0P Tuckstead Moss (IRE) L Han 6-10-8 ..... B Johnson
12 0/33 Willowtime (IRE) P Nicholls 6-10-8 ..... W McFarland
13 0P6/10 Greatwest Bridge (IRE) T Morley 6-10-6 ..... B Brooke ★
14 P Phantasm (IRE) A Hobby 4-10-5 ..... D Walsh
15 5/0P0- Scottish Park (IRE) M Pipe 8-10-5 .....
16 0/0P0- Desert Caravan (IRE) M Wellington 8-10-0 .....

Betting: 9-2 Contract Bridge, 11-2 Above The Clouds, 6-1 Blade Of Fortune, 7-1 Apache Park, 10-1 Red Viper, Bella

2.20 WELSH BREWERS NOVICE H'CAP CHASE
3m £3,716 (9 declared)

1 4136/P Pennypiece (IRE) 6 L Jones 7-11-10 ..... Guy Lewis (3) ★
2 4/4603 Elmar (IRE) (CD) A Pace 7-11-8 ..... D O'Sullivan
3 /-3427 Bonds Valley (B) (CD) (D) M Pipe 6-11-3 ..... A P McCoy
4 -1712F Hollywood Gamble (IRE) R Alner 7-11-0 ..... A Thornton
5 1/1P4P1 Water Wonder (B) M Bradstock 7-10-9 ..... G Bradley ★
6 -/4463 Thomas Warrior (BF) J Old 9-11-6 ..... D Gallagher
7 /-/-/- Chingwood (IRE) Mrs L Wadh 7-10-5 ..... Mr A Fitzgerald ★
8 6/P/1P Sun Parrot (IRE) (D) L Jefferies 10-10-5 ..... W Marston
9 /53P-P Desert Guarantee (BF) M Wellington 8-10-0 ..... W Worthington

Betting: 7-2 Water Valley, 9-2 Hollywood Gamble, Sun Parrot, 11-2 Water Wonder, 7-1 Pennypiece, Xaxx, 8-1 Thermal Warrior, 14-1 Elmar, Bugsbo

2.55 MAY HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 4f 110yds £3,488 (7 declared)

1 11P-1P Beholden (BF) (D) P R Webber 10-11-13 ..... Mr R Thornton (3)
2 2U1/301 Lord Mollborough (D) (CD) (BF) J Neville 7-11-1 ..... A P McCoy
3 2P0/2P7 Mixed Blessing (BF) (D) M Pipe 7-10-11 ..... J Lynn
4 P-P4P3 El Don (BF) (CD) R Alner 7-10-10 ..... J Dalby
5 /42P34 Miss Lou-Lou (IRE) Miss N Haigh 5-10-7 ..... A Bowling (7)
6 17/1P8 Exiled Royal (IRE) (D) N Hawker 6-10-3 ..... R Johnson
7 4/P/331 Elmhirst (B) (CD) (D) J Ang 6-10-0 .....

Betting: 7-1 Cloud Dancer, 7-2 El Don, 5-1 Lord Mollborough, 11-2 Elmhirst, 6-1 Miss Lou-Lou, 7-1 Hatchlow, 20-1 Quiet Hour

3.25 GREIG MIDDLETON LADIES CHAMPIONSHIP HUNTERS' CHASE (Amateurs)
3m £3,435 (7 declared)

1 F-1411 Corner Boy (IRE) (B) C Dawson 10-12-4 ..... J Dennis (7)
2 155421 Cumberland Blues (IRE) (BF) Mrs A Lockwood 8-12-4 ..... A Dalton (7)
3 5/5424 False Economy (IRE) (D) D C Bain 12-12-4 ..... K Scargill (7)
4 62-122 Mister Gebo (IRE) (CD) Mrs D Dyson 12-12-0 ..... C Dyson (7)
5 211112 Saxon Heritage (IRE) (D) R T Bambridge 13-12-0 ..... A Dare (5)
6 -11111 Earthmover (IRE) (D) R Barber 6-11-9 ..... P Bandry (7)
7 -5432/ Lonesome Traveller (B) (D) Mrs M Hand 8-11-9 ..... A Hand (7)

Betting: 6-4 Earthmover, 5-2 Corner Boy, 4-1 Cumberland Blues, 8-1 Mister Gebo, 10-1 Saxon Heritage, 20-1 Lonesome Traveller, 33-1 False Economy

3.55 BARGAIN-BUY SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 110yds £1,996 (12 declared)

1 R0-420 Beeks (IRE) (D) P Richens 10-11-12 ..... M Ahern
2 140322 Red Tel (F) M Pipe 5-11-4 ..... A P McCoy ★
3 /6F-25 Powder Monkey (B) T Needham 7-11-2 ..... G Tormey
4 0-RP42 Mocado (B) F Yardley 10-11-2 ..... X Aizpuru (5) ★
5 P/4412 De Be Wise (BB) J Fitch-Hayes 7-11-1 ..... B Fenton
6 606014 Caitlin Caper (IRE) (D) T Watson 5-10-8 ..... M A Fitzgerald
7 3-0FPP More Milk (F2) J Neville 5-10-3 ..... D J Burchell ★
8 5-P002 Honeybed Wood (IRE) M Sheppard 8-10-2 ..... B Johnson
9 5046S3/ Spiki Level (11) J R Payne 9-10-1 ..... Mr S Durack (7)
10 050-0 Calgary Girl (11) R Barber 5-10-0 ..... S Powell
11 0-3064 Bunell (B) J Budgar 8-10-0 ..... M Batchelor (7)
12 0PP/P6 Sullivor Glen (IRE) (B) Dr P Pritchard 11-10-0 ..... Dr P Pritchard

Betting: 3-1 Red Tel, 5-1 Do Be Wise, 7-1 Mocado, Honeybed Wood, 8-1 Powder Monkey, Caitlin Caper, 9-1 Calgary Girl, 14-1 Beeks, Spiki Level, Bunell

4.25 HUE AND CRY HANDICAP CHASE
2m 3f 110yds £3,488 (6 declared)

1 21P414 James The First (11) (CD) P Nicholls 9-12-0 ..... M A Fitzgerald
2 1-5U16 More Vacation (IRE) P Nicholls 8-12-0 ..... Mr J Tizzard (7)
3 55-521 Seek The Faith (IRE) (C) M Sheppard 8-11-4 ..... B Powell
4 305124 The Carrot Man (IRE) (BF) P Makinson 9-10-13 ..... I Aspell (3)
5 1112/2 Maggots Green (11) (D) J Bradley 10-10-6 ..... R Johnson
6 111151 Red Branch (11) (D) J King 8-10-5 ..... J Culloty

Betting: 5-4 Seek The Faith, 9-4 Red Branch, 11-2 James The First, 8-1 The Carrot Man, 14-1 Maggots Green, 20-1 Bare Vacation

4.55 END OF SEASON INTERMEDIATE OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE
2m 110yds £1,298 (9 declared)

1 Rupert Blues (IRE) (D) J King 5-11-11 ..... Mr O McPhail (7)
2 60 Bullies (IRE) J O Shea 5-11-4 ..... Michael Brennan (3)
3 Irish Mist (IRE) 5-11-4 ..... V Slattery
4 56 Just Bayard (IRE) B De Haan 5-11-4 ..... C Llewellyn
5 0-P14 The Village Way (IN) D Nicholson 6-11-4 ..... R Johnson
6 Ansthebandie A Hobbs 4-10-13 ..... Mr R Thornton (7)
7 Mirabella D Williams 5-10-13 ..... M Clarke
8 Oddie's Chapel M Sheppard 4-10-13 ..... B Gallagher
9 0 The Bonsiers Moon (IRE) Mrs E Heath 4-10-13 ..... B Gallagher

Betting: 5-4 Rupert Blues, 9-4 The Village Way, 13-2 Just Bayard, 12-1 Irish Mist, 16-1 Ansthebandie, Mirabella, 25-1 Oddie's Chapel

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Jockeys	1st	Runs	%	Level St
B Bromley	30	123	24.4	-33.84
A P McCoy	25	90	27.8	+2.06
D Bridgwater	20	81	24.7	+31.48
C Llewellyn	18	104	15.4	-36.24
M A Fitzgerald	13	78	16.7	-19.67
A Maguire	12	67	17.9	-17.15

Trainers	1st	Runs	%	Level St
M C Pipe	56	248	22.7	-16.23
D Nicholson	16	57	28.1	+0.80
P F Nicholls	15	69	21.7	-9.31
J A D Old	8	37	21.6	-8.83
N Bloss	7	34	20.6	+6.38
D Bechell	5	29	17.2	+0.38
J S King	4	27	14.8	-9.50

York card with TV form guide and ratings

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
2.05	Remaadi Sun	Angus-G (nap)
2.35	Silverani	The Fly
3.10	Reams Of Verse	Reams Of Verse
3.40	Dashing Blue	Double Splendour (nb)
4.10	Indian Silver	Indian Silver
4.40	Flirting Around	Windsor Castle

Left-handed, U-shaped course measuring two miles with a run-in of nearly five furlongs and a straight six furlongs. Wide and flat.
Going: Good, Good to soft in places. ★ Denotes blinkers. ● Top form rated.
Draw: Low to middle an advantage in 3.40.
Long distance travellers: 2.05 Jazz King & 3.40 Samwar, Gay Kelleway, Dorset 276 miles. 2.35 Blue River, T G Mills, Surrey 223 miles. 2.35 Love Has No Pride & 4.10 Balance The Books, R Hannon, Wilts, 221 miles.
Seven day winners: 2.05 Augustan.
Bikkered first time: 2.05 Remaadi Sun.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing.

2.05 YORKSHIRE LIFE MAGAZINE HANDICAP
1m 3f 195yds £7,375 (12 declared) CH4

165 (7) 12/00- Zarabeska (1989) (D) L Cumani 6-9-13 ..... R Fincham (5) 83
162 (5) 1223-1 Angus-G (27) (D) Mrs M Reveley 5-9-11 ..... K Darley ●90
163 (10) /100-9 Prospector's Gone (48) J Pearce 4-9-8 ..... G Bardwell 79
164 (11) -04305 Hazard A Guess (6) (C) (D) D Nicholls 7-9-7 ..... Alex. Greaves 87
165 (3) 5110-6 Bertie Mine (17) (D) J Watts 4-9-3 ..... L Dettori 84
166 (6) 40-022 Remaadi Sun (6) (CD) M Usher 5-9-1 ..... J Quinn ★ 82
167 (4) 1340- Jazz King (2000) (D) Gay Kelleway 4-9-1 ..... K Fallon 92
168 (8) 60-00M Sweet Murder (12) D Chapman 4-8-6 ..... D O'Donohoe (3) 83
169 (9) 405 Durald (27) D Smith 5-8-5 ..... A Culhane 88
170 (12) 203-04 Templetree (B) (D) J L Harris 4-8-4 ..... D Holland 84
171 (2) 00-431 Augustan (7) (CD) S Gollings 6-7-10(5ex) ..... L Charnock 83
172 (1) 5-0002 African Sea (7) M Chapman 4-7-10 ..... P Fessey (5) 80

Betting: 5-2 Angus-G, 4-1 Remaadi Sun, 7-1 Hazard A Guess, 9-1 Bertie Mine, 10-1 Templetree, 11-1 Zarabeska, 12-1 Augustan, 14-1 Jazz King.

FORM GUIDE – Zarabeska: Classed leaders, one pace final 2f, 8th of 19, 6l behind Henry Island at Doncaster 1m 4f hcap, Gd. Angus-G: Progressive handicapper, going well, led final furlong, stayed on strongly, won at Newmarket 1m 4f hcap, Gd. Beating Galapan by 1½l, Remaadi Sun: Fairly creditable, will be better suited by strongly-run race. Effort 2f out, stayed on one pace, 5th of 9, 7l behind Polar Champ at Doncaster 1m 2f hcap, Gd-Sft, Bertie Mine: Better for race, effort 3f out, weakened quickly, 8th of 9, 23l behind Iron Charm, Hurtle, Rizeo, 2m hcap, Gd-Sft. Remaadi Sun: Led just inside final furlong, caught close home, 2nd of 9, ok behind Polar Champ at Doncaster 1m 2f hcap, Gd-Sft, Fairly handicapped. Templetree: Races prominently, should remain decent pace. Effort 3f out, ran on at one pace, 4th of 13, 13l behind Valedictory at Newmarket 1m 4f hcap, Gd.

2.35 SHEPHERD TROPHY RATED HANDICAP 3YO
1m 2f 85yds £13,442 (13 declared) CH4

201 (3) 3522-3 Caviar Royale (24) T Barron 9-7 ..... J Carroll 83
202 (4) 3615-4 Ball Paradise (32) P Cole 9-6 ..... T Quinn 88
203 (12) 0114- The Fly (302) (BF) H Wills 9-2 ..... M Wills ●92
204 (13) 1-34 Sugarfoot (B) M Tinkler 9-1 ..... K Darley 94
205 (1) 1155-5 Blue River (25) T Mills 8-13 ..... M J Kinane 95
206 (5) 21-001 Polar Flight (B) M Johnston 8-13 ..... J Weaver 95
207 (10) 31080- Marathon Maid (208) R Fahey 8-12 ..... A Culhane 79
208 (11) 22-1 Silverani (28) L Cumani 8-12 ..... L Dettori 97
209 (9) 3-23 Delilah (13) (BF) M Stoute 8-10 ..... J Reid 98
210 (2) 10-204 Love Has No Pride (B) (C) R Hannon 8-10 ..... Diane O'Neill 83
211 (6) 1452-2 Mr Shambolique (48) (BF) B Hills 8-10 ..... D Holland 90
212 (7) 503-40 Bless Flower (28) P Chapple-Hyam 8-8 ..... S Maloney (3) 82
213 (8) 31-4 Noble Dane (25) P Hicks 8-4 ..... Pat Eddery 89

Betting: 5-1 The Fly, Silverani, 7-1 Delilah, Mr Shambolique, 8-1 Ball Paradise, Polar Flight, 10-1 Blue River, Love Has No Pride.

FORM GUIDE – Caviar Royale: Challenged 2f out, one paced, last of 3, 6l behind Stantonough at Thirsk 1m slks, Gd. Ball Paradise: Effort over 1f out, unable to quicken in the closing stages, 4th of 7, 3l behind Solent at Nottingham 1m slks, Gd-Fm. The Fly: Improved to leave every chance 1f out, no extra, 4th of 17, 3l behind Al Azhar at Doncaster 1m hcap, Gd-Fm. Sugarfoot: With leaders, effort over 1f out, not quicken at the finish, 4th of 8, 7l behind Sweet Law at Newmarket 7f, Gd. Blue River: Held up, headway over 1f out, stayed on well, 5th of 19, 4½l behind River's Source at Newmarket 1m 2f hcap, Gd-Fm. Polar Flight: Was at Cologne 1m slks, Gd, beating Le Babael by 2l, Silverani: Headway to lead 2f out, soon clear, won at Ripon 1m rnds, Gd, beating No Grousing by 2½l. Delilah: Headway over 2f out, stayed on at same pace, 3rd of 5, 3l behind Melodic at Ascot 1m, Gd-Fm. Love Has No Pride: Headway over 1f out, edged left, ran on at one pace, 4th of 15, 2½l behind Prince of Denial at Kempton 1m 1f hcap, Gd. Noble Dane: Headway over 1f out, ran on, 4th of 18, 11l behind Amid Afrade at Newbury 1m hcap, Gd.

3.10 TATTERSALLS MUSIDORA STAKES (GROUP 3) 3YO
1m 2f 85yds £26,048 (10 declared) CH4

201 (3) 2111-6 Reams of Verse (B) H Cecil 8-11 ..... K Fallon ●98
202 (1) 0-2 Alcalde (38) (BF) P Kelleway 8-8 ..... K Darley 78
203 (6) 221-10 Calypso Grant (25) P Haslam 8-8 ..... Pat Eddery 94
204 (10) 2202-0 Desert Legend (29) H Morrison 8-8 ..... C Rutter 76
205 (5) 011- Entice (288) 5 bin Suroor 8-8 ..... L Dettori 85
206 (8) 0313- Elmtie (288) P Chapple-Hyam 8-8 ..... J Reid 88
207 (9) 5650-3 French Maid (B) C Brittain 8-8 ..... B Doyle 75
208 (7) 0-1 Ballerette (19) J Gosden 8-8 ..... R Cochrane 88

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Jockeys	1st	Runs	%	Level St
L Dettori	40	164	24.4	+55.40
Pat Eddery	32	181	17.7	-6.53
J Reid	20	141	14.2	-31.21
W R Swinburn	19	130	14.6	+8.88
M J Kinane	15	76	19.7	-8.60
W Ryan	15	100	15	+5.67

Trainers	1st	Runs	%	Level St
H R A Cecil	23	92	25	-5.87
M R Stoute	23	114	20.2	+32.47
J H M Gosden	18	90	20.5	+18.48
R Hannon	15	139	10.8	-36.67
P F I Cole	12	88	14.8	-21.82
B W Hills	12	95	12.6	-29.88
M Johnston	11	125	8.95	-65.13

209 (4)	1-	Society Rose (292) M Stoute 8-8	M J Kinane 80
210 (2)	136-43	Vagabond Chanteuse (B) T Easterby 8-8	T Quinn 82

Betting: 6-4 Reams Of Verse, 3-1 Noisette, 5-1 Entice, 8-1 Society Rose, 10-1 Elmtie, 14-1 Calypso Grant, 16-1 Dame Laura.

FORM GUIDE – Reams Of Verse: In touch, effort 3f out, outpaced, 6th of 15, 7l behind Sleepytime at Newmarket 1m, Gd. Alcalde: Hampered 3f out, kept on towards the finish, 2nd of 11, 10l behind Desert Venture at Sandown 1m 2f rnds, Gd. Calypso Grant: Headway 3f out, beaten when impeded over 1f out, 7th of 10, 8l behind Dance Parade at Newbury 7f, Gd. Noisette: Steady progress from 3f out to lead close home, won at Pontefract 1m, Gd, beating Fahris by a nk. Elmtie: Led, headed final furlong, unable to quicken closing stages, 3rd of 9, 13l behind Bogam at Newbury 7f, Sft. Malestrite: Headway to lead well over 1f out, kept on, won at Ascot 1m 3y rds 75l gt to Apt beating Flamboyance by 2½l. Society Rose: Led over 1f out, steadily asserted, won at Newcastle 7f rnds, Gd-Fm, beating Kippilaw by 4l.

3.40 STANLEY RACING SPRINT TROPHY HANDICAP
6f £11,376 (16 declared) CH4

401 (1) 060-61 Cyrano's Lad (B) (CD) C Dwyer 8-9-7 ..... K Fallon 89
402 (14) 032-02 Dashing Blue (14) (CD) I Balding 4-9-6 ..... L Dettori 92
403 (3) 050-00 Sea Bone (24) (D) P Harris 7-9-4 ..... M J Kinane 79
404 (6) 5-3304 King Of Penn (B) (D) A Jarvis 4-9-3 ..... W J O'Connor 83
405 (4) 120220 Croeben (BF) (13) (D) M Usher 5-9-2 ..... A Daly (5) ★ 91
406 (16) 23240- Uncommitted Love (227) M Johnston 4-9-2 ..... J Weaver 83
407 (5) 060-46 Westcourt Magic (24) (D) M W Easterby 4-9-2 ..... T Quinn 84
408 (10) 12342- Double Splendour (215) (CD) (BF) P Felgate 7-8-1 ..... K Darley ●90
409 (13) 00-032 World Premier (13) (D) C Benstead 4-8-1 ..... B Doyle 86
410 (2) 11501- Ballin Jeanne (213) (CD) T Easterby 4-8-13 ..... G Parkin (5) 86
411 (8) 315/01 Zinzak (12) (D) I McCabe 4-8-9 ..... J Carroll 90
412 (15) 200-00 Samwar (18) (D) Gay Kelleway 5-8-6 ..... R Cochrane 89
413 (12) 1203-6 Bob Adams (22) (D) M Bell 4-8-6 ..... M Fenton 81
414 (7) 00-360 Tumbleweed Ridge (13) (BF) B Meehan 4-8-7 ..... Pat Eddery ★ 82
415 (11) 010-00 Charlie Sillett (13) (D) B Hills 5-8-7 ..... N Mallon (5) 79
416 (9) 0113-0 Yorkie George (28) (D) L Cumani 3-7-11 ..... K Fitzpatrick (5) 87

Betting: 13-2 Double Splendour, 15-2 Cyrano's Lad, 8-1 World Premier, Tumbleweed Ridge, 10-1 Dashing Blue, Ballin Jeanne, 11-1 Samwar, 12-1 King Of Penn, 14-1 Hon Rebecca, Charlie Sillett, 16-1 Croeben Gill.

FORM GUIDE – Cyrano's Lad: Front-runner, a good form. Made all, stayed on well, won at Newmarket 6f hcap, Gd, beating How Long by 1½l, with King Of Penn 3rd a, 4th of 7, 33l behind. Dashing Blue: Best on sound surface. Headway to have every chance final furlong, kept on well, 2nd of 9, nk behind Averti at Bath 5f slks, Gd-Fm. Sea Bone: In touch to halfway, disappointing, dropped away tamely, last of 8, 18l behind Soviet State at Thirsk 6f slks, Sft. Uncommitted Love: Scores best at 7f, Never better than mid-division, 8th of 8, 9l behind Soviet State at Thirsk 6f slks, Gd. Westcourt Magic: Front-runner, last 3f 1st to halfway, in touch well tested near finish, 6th of 8, 9l behind Soviet State at Thirsk 6f slks, Gd. Double Splendour: In excellent form last term, has run well fresh. Effort over 1f out, stayed on well, 2nd of 23, 2½l behind Ballin Jeanne her 15lb at York 6f hcap, Gd. World Premier: Best on top-of-the-ground. Prominent, led over 1f out, ran on, 2nd of 15, 2½l behind Tregaron at Ascot 7f hcap, Gd-Fm, with Croeben 6lbf gave 4lb, never nearer to challenge in 11th. Tumbleweed Ridge: Has 5lbt, never troubled leaders in 10th, Samwar: Inc 2lbf, well handicapped, should be suited by drop in grade. Has had no let-weakened final furlong, in 13th and Charlie Silletti inc 1lbf, likes soft ground, a never dangerous 22nd. Yorkie George: Has promising race, never nearer, 12th, 10l behind Treasure Touch at Newmarket 6f hcap, Gd-Fm. Will appreciate cut in ground.

4.10 EBF AER LINGUS LEEDS–BRADFORD AIRPORT NOVICE FILLIES STAKES
5f £5,848 (5 declared)

591 (4) 1 Eastern Lyric (B) (D) J Berry 9-0 ..... K Darley 87
592 (2) 033126 Filey Brigg (7) (D) W Kemp 8-10 ..... K Fallon 85
Balance The Books R Hannon 8-8 ..... Pat Eddery —
593 (3) Child Prodigy J Watts 8-8 ..... J Reid —
595 (1) 2 Indian Silver (B) M Channon 8-8 ..... T Quinn ●90

Betting: 2-1 Eastern Lyric, 9-4 Balance The Books, 9-2 Filey Brigg, Indian Silver, 13-2 Child Prodigy

4.40 NEWTON INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT CONDITIONS STAKES
1m 5f 194yds £7,560 (5 declared)

691 (2) 11-5 Windsor Castle (18) P Cole 9-8 ..... T Quinn ●90
692 (4) 204-42 Flirting Around (6) M Stoute 8-12 ..... K Fallon 87
693 (5) 25 Spartan Royale (11) C Brittain 8-12 ..... M Roberts 86
694 (1) 5-2 Zinzari (21) D Loder 8-12 ..... L Dettori 88
695 (3) 6 Autumn Time (28) P Chapple-Hyam 8-7 ..... J Reid 79

Betting: 16-8 Flirting Around, 5-2 Zinzari, 3-1 Windsor Castle, 13-2 Spartan Royale, 8-1 Autumn Time.

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Trainer watch

Richard Hannon trains Royal one for a new trainer today — Chepstow: 1.50 Swiss Account, E Wyman to A Hamilton. 3.25 False Economy, J Edwards to Mrs D Scott. Stable bandage. P Warner to R Beadnidge. 3.55 Lonesome Traveller, R Hodgson to P Hitchens.
Yorks: 3.10 Reams Of Verse, B Wills to Sheikh Bin Suroor.

Results

REDCAR

2.15 (5f) 1, CHIC STATHAM, J Weaver (7-7) 2, Stanley Salute (5-4 Fav), 3, Miss Pearl (11-2). 9 ran. 2¼l, ¾l (M Johnston). Tote £3.80; £1.30 £1.10, £1.70. Dual F: £3.90. Trio: £9.60. CSF: £8.69.

2.45 (5f) 1, RIVER TERN, J Weaver (6-1). 2, Pella Bleiker (10-11 Fav). 3, Greenall Bright (20-1). 10 ran. ¾l, ¾l (J Stanley). Tote: £7.10; £2.10 £1.80 £4.80. Dual F: £61.80. Trio: £91.90. CSF: £10.88.

3.15 (14th) 1, GRADLE, Kim Tinkler (20-1). 2, Steppenwolfe (8-1). 3, Jack Flash (11-1). 14 ran. Nk, 1l (Miss L Jackson). Tote: £26.10; £5.10 £2.10 £3.80. Dual F: £74.70. Trio: £1,382.30.

3.48 (1m 2f) 1, JACK THE LAD, J Weaver (8-1). 2, Royal Regiment (5-1). 3, Bale Bird (5-4 Fav). 13 ran. 1¼l, 1 (J Hetherton). Tote: £10.10; £4.10, £2.20, £1.10. Dual F: £24.50. Trio: £18.60. CSF: £57.50. Tricast: £92.30.

4.15 (1m 3f) 1, SANDHIRY, J Carroll (8-1). 2, Manarola (7-2). 3, Taurus (7-2). 9-4 Fav Margaux. 12 ran. 3, 3. (J Watts) Tote: £7.50, £2.80, £1.30, £1.50.

Soccer

English agents caught up in new Tapie trial

Paul Webster and Martin Thorpe

CHRIS WADDLE's lawyer and accountant are being tried in France on suspicion of being intermediaries in illegal transfer activity. Mel Stein and Len Lazarus, who also act for Paul Gascoigne, are being tried in their absence after allegedly failing to answer international warrants.

However, Stein yesterday denied that he or his business associate Lazarus had received any such warrants and said he had offered to give evidence but had heard nothing since.

He denied the charges levelled at them by a court in Marseille trying the disgraced former Olympique Marseille (OM) president and former cabinet minister Bernard Tapie, former Marseille executives and other soccer figures on charges of frauds involving more than £11 million.

Stein stressed that the only transfer he had ever done with Marseille was Waddle's move from Tottenham for £4.25 million in 1989. He dismissed any allegation of illegality in that as "ridiculous".

He added: "I can only assume that somebody has packed up a mass of lies in France and, because we're conveniently not there, we're the right people to blame."

As for being tried in his absence, he said: "I can't believe that. I had a letter from the people in France back in 1993 that I answered and said, 'If you want, come and see me and we'll talk about whatever you want to talk about.' And then I got ill and was away from work for two years. And that was it. I've never heard another word.

"I know nothing about the trial. It is an absolute nonsense to me. How can you go ahead with a trial if you haven't served somebody? I'll definitely take advice on this. I'm not going to ignore it."

More revelations about high-level corruption in European football are expected to emerge in the trial, which opened yesterday and is expected to last three weeks. Jean-Pierre Bernès, Tapie's one-time right-hand man and former Marseille director-general, is one of the defendants and has promised "disclosures".

Tapie, Marseille president between 1987 and 1993, will leave prison each day to attend court because he is already serving an eight-month sentence connected with bribes paid by his club to French League opponents, Valenciennes, to throw a First Division match in 1993.

If Tapie is convicted of the new charges he could face another five years in jail.

Altogether 20 are accused, among them the former coach of the French national team, Michel Hidalgo, who was once Marseille's general manager.

A preliminary investigation of fraud, embezzlement and other illegal transactions alleged that Marseille funds were used to bribe players and referees in the European Cup and other Uefa club competitions.

An examining magistrate identified three matches won by Marseille in which bribery was suspected. These were against AEK Athens in 1989, Spartak Moscow in 1991 and Bruges in 1993, the year in which Marseille won the European Cup.

None of these occasions was mentioned in the charges yesterday, but the question of systematic corruption in European club-football is expected to be raised by the defence to justify Tapie's activities.

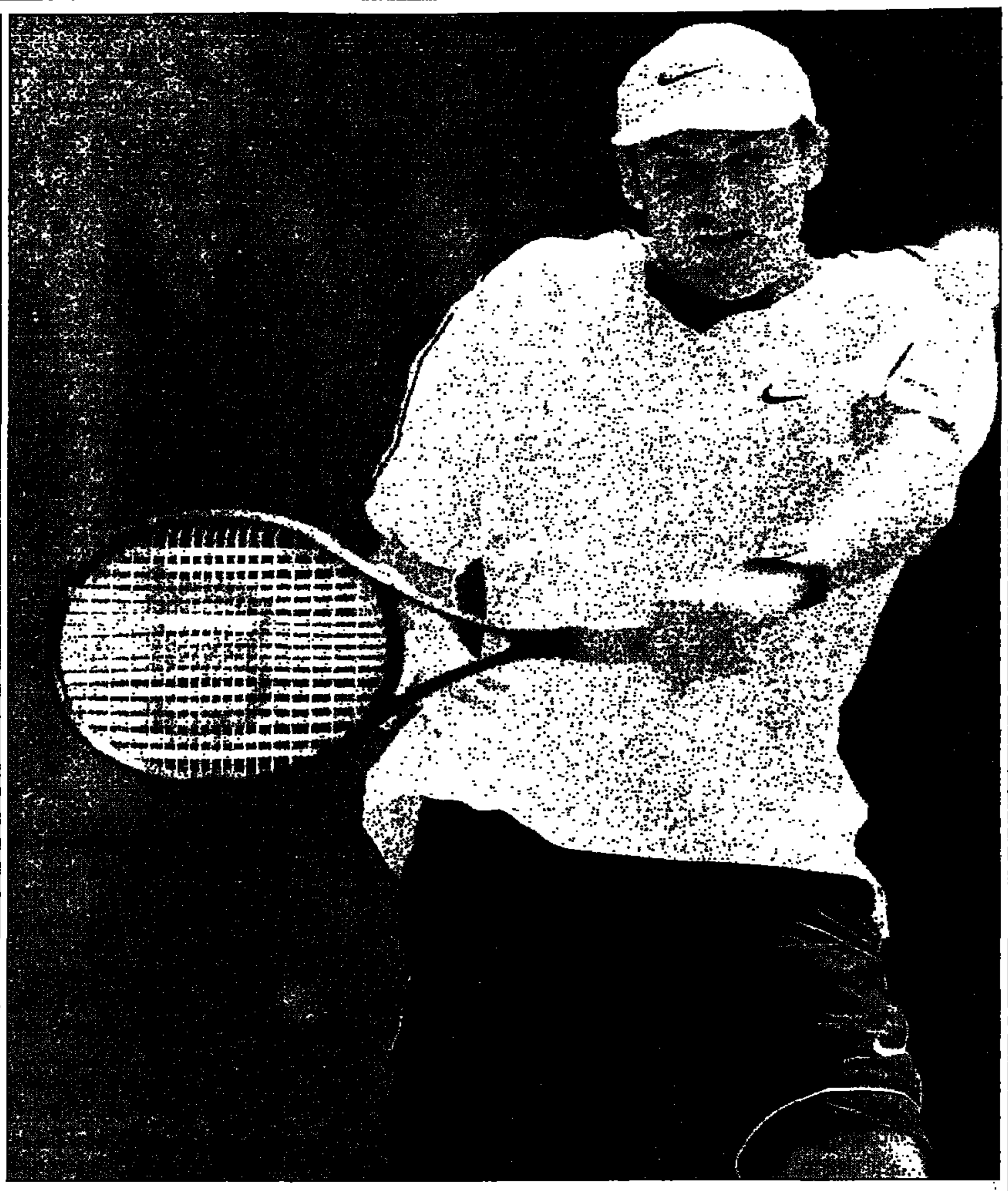
The prosecution has alleged that funds were used to finance bribes to attract foreign players. Much of the money allegedly went in commissions to international agents and scouts, with players benefiting from fictional loans or bundles of cash.

Tapie's lawyers said before the trial that the defence would rest largely on the claim that underhand payments were common practice in European football and that Marseille were obliged to break the rules to attract star players from rival clubs.

"After what has happened to OM, chairmen of other clubs have got cold feet over back-handers and the result has been a mass exodus of French stars to clubs abroad," said the defence lawyer Jean-Yves Liénard.

"The exodus has become so disastrous that the sports ministry has had to create special tax concessions for footballers to attract them back to the country. What was done illegally will now be done with government approval."

But Pierre Philippon, who prepared the case against the former Marseille executives, said such an argument did not stand up.



All clayed out . . . Rusedski on his way to a straight-sets defeat by Spain's Albert Portas yesterday CLIVE BRUNSKILL

Musketeers must stay says Boro chairman

Michael Walker

THE first split in the executive ranks of Middlesbrough appeared yesterday when the chairman Steve Gibson appeared to contradict his manager's assertion that Boro's three big-name foreign musketeers will be allowed to leave if the club's relegation stands.

Bryan Robson said at the weekend that he did not expect Juninho, Emerson or Fabrizio Ravanelli to stay for long. "If we go down," he said, "it is absolutely vital that we come straight back up again. There would be no point in holding on to players, even of the quality of these three, if they didn't fancy a year in a lower division."

Yesterday, however, Gibson said: "The only players who will be leaving are those whom Bryan Robson says can go. I can't see how it would be in the interests of Middlesbrough to let players like Juninho and Ravanelli go."

In the run-up to the FA Cup final, dissatisfaction appears to be spreading. The central defender Gianluca Festa, once of Cagliari, said: "It's been a complete waste of a season. I know exactly what sort of fighting spirit is required to stay up and Middlesbrough didn't have what it takes."

Ravanelli, who missed Sunday's 1–1 draw at Leeds with a back injury, added to the problems by saying he was doubtful for Saturday's showpiece with Chelsea. "I have only a 50 per cent chance of making the Cup final," he said.

Gibson is still pondering legal action over the Premier League's decision to dock the club three points for their no-show at Blackburn.

Sunderland's manager Peter Reid lost £160,000 yesterday when his 400,000 shares in the club dropped by 40p with his side's departure from the Premiership. The chairman Bob Murray was the biggest loser, more than £1.2 million being wiped off the value of his holding.

George Graham's summer refit at Leeds will start with the signing of the Scotland defender David Robertson, whose contract with Rangers has expired. He travelled to Elland Road yesterday to finalise terms but the fee is likely to be settled by tribunal in August.

Arsenal have given new one-year contracts to their defenders Steve Bould, 34, and Nigel Winterburn, 33.

Vinnie Jones has signed a new two-year contract with Wimbledon and is expected to drop the legal action he instigated to secure a free transfer.

Rusedski chokes on red dust

Stephen Bierley in Rome sees the British No.2 fall in the first round of the Italian Open

THE combination of a clay court and a Spaniard proved too much for Greg Rusedski here yesterday. The British No. 2 lost 7–6, 7–6 to Albert Portas in the first round of the Italian Open, and today it will be Tim Henman's turn to test himself against the same potentially lethal concoction of Spanish top-spin and red dust.

Both Britons have been out since mid-March, when Rusedski broke down with a wrist injury and Henman, who yesterday dropped two places to No. 13 in the world, needed an elbow operation. "Let's start Queen's tomorrow," said Rusedski, his eyes gleaming at the thought of green grass, although first there is the little matter of the French Open where, he stressed, he has never lost in the first round.

Mind you, he has played at Roland Garros only twice, once as a Canadian in 1994 when he reached the third round, and last year as one of Britain's finest when he lost in the second round.

Portas, who reached the final of the recent Barcelona Open, is one of 12 Spaniards in the top 100, although there is little remarkable about his play. "He's a one-surface player," said Rusedski dismissively. One might have suspected a red mist had descended, but the old GR grin was quick to resurface.

On the positive side Rusedski had felt no pain in his left wrist and created enough chances to have won. "But the way I played the big points was terrible."

This, alas, has been a constant motif. He hired the American Brian Teacher to help him win the big points by being more aggressive but he still charges the net behind approach shots which lack penetration and zip, and his concentration continues to falter at key moments.

One such came yesterday after Rusedski had broken the Portas service for a 5-3 lead. The courts are currently extremely dry and therefore quick, favouring Rusedski, yet serving for the set he failed to win a point, beginning with a double fault.

So Portas, generally uncomfortable facing the left-hander's serve, levelled and then won the first tie-break, Rusedski missing a simple smash to lose 9–7.

The second tie-break was simpler for Portas, who hit a delightful cross-court winner off Rusedski's first serve and never looked back, thus denying the Briton a possible second-round crack at Pete Sampras, who today plays his fellow American Jim Courier.

It seems a long time ago that Rusedski took the first set off Sampras in the final of the San Jose indoor tournament in February. It was then that his wrist trouble first flared up, forcing him to pull out at 0–5 in the second set.

Thomas Muster, the holder here, and Richard Krajicek, last year's beaten finalist, had standard first-round wins, but there was a surprise when Mark Philippoussis went down 6–2, 6–0 to Morocco's Karim Alami.

Last month the powerful Australian won his first-ever clay court tournament, in Munich, which made this defeat all the more surprising.

● Steffi Graf played her first competitive match after 100 days out with a knee injury when she and her partner Ines Gorrochategui were beaten in three sets by Rika Hiraki and Florencia Labat in the first round of the German Open in Berlin yesterday.

Chess

Robot drains human brain

Leonard Barden on how Kasparov and mankind finally met their match

DEEP BLUE, the IBM super-computer, gave Garry Kasparov his worst day at the office on Sunday when it needed only an hour and 19 moves to crush the Russian in the decisive sixth game of the "man versus machine" rematch in New York.

It sealed a famous 3½–2½ victory that stunned masters and grandmasters worldwide. It was the first time a computer had beaten a human world champion, the first time Kasparov had lost any match, and the defeat was by far the most rapid of his career.

At his press conference he said he was "ashamed" at the manner of his defeat and then complained that IBM had refused him access to the computer's practice games or to print-outs of its reasoning. He even hinted that Deep Blue's programmers had cheated by modifying its program during play "like Maradona's Hand of God goal".

Sour grapes apart, it all began to go wrong for Kasparov when, after winning the opening game 10 days ago, he resigned the second in a drawn position, then belied his dynamic reputation by adopting a weird anti-computer strategy, with pawns line-abreast on the third rank.

The game that really broke Kasparov's spirit, however, was the fifth, his last with the white pieces. He seemed to have a won endgame, with a pawn poised to queen, only for Deep Blue to march its king down the board and force a draw by perpetual check. "The match was over then," Kasparov said. "I had no strength left."

There is a more mundane explanation of the final game. Kasparov's opening moves intended a well analysed sequence, 7 . . . Bd6; 8 Qe2 h6. Instead, still thinking on autopilot, he played his planned eighth move one move early, allowing Deep Blue's powerful knight sacrifice.

Immediately Kasparov looked at the position in horror. His king, with no safe square, quickly came under attack and Deep Blue rubbed salt in the wound by conducting its final assault in true Kasparov style.

At the end the world champion saw that his planned 19 . . . bxc4 20 Qxc4 Kb7 fails to 21 Qa6 mate, and if Nb4 20 Qxf5 dxc4 21 Ne5 with too many threats.

Kasparov had beaten Deep Blue 4–2 in 1996 but having lost their latest encounter there is certain to be a third match. Can Kasparov win that? He can discard his computer advisers and revert to a more open game, he can haggle for pre-match access to Deep Blue's trial runs, and he should be psychologically tougher next time. But Deep Blue's team, crucially aided by the former US champion Joel Benjamin, who "taught" the machine strategy, have shown enormous improvements. Deep Blue has learned active defence, can sacrifice material rather than hoard irrelevant pawns, has greatly upgraded its depth of calculation thanks to its doubled capacity and has the scope to become stronger still. Chess players can never sleep easy again.

White: Deep Blue. Black: Kasparov. Game 6.

1 e4 c6; 2 d4 d5; 3 Nc3 dxe4; 4 Nxe4 Nd7; 5 Ng5 Ngf6; 6 Bd3 e6; 7 N1f3 h6?; 8 Nxe6 Qe7; 9 0-0 fxe6; 10 Bg6+ Kd8; 11 Bf4 b5; 12 a4 Bb7; 13 Re1 Nd5; 14 Bg3 Kc8; 15 axb5 cxb5; 16 Qd3 Bc6; 17 Bf5 exf5; 18 Rxe7 Bxe7; 19 c4 Resigns.

Heartless machine, page 15

Prague Writers' Festival 1997

Texts for Nothing - Texty pro nic

The 7th Prague Writers' Festival presents a selection of fine authors from the Czech Republic and around the world. Meet them at the Franz Kafka Centre, Old Town Square, at 7pm from 24 to 28 June.

Tuesday 24 June
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Wednesday 25 June
André du Bouchet — France
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Vladimír Křivánek — Czech Republic
Giuseppe Conte — Italy

Thursday 26 June
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Zinovy Zinik — Russia
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Friday 27 June
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The Prague Writers' Festival is dedicated to Samuel Beckett.

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League acts on Ferguson's verbal attacks

THE Premier League has expressed concern to Manchester United about Alex Ferguson's recent outspoken criticisms, especially the confrontational language used by the man named yesterday as Carling Manager of the Year, *writes Martin Thorpe.*

The League has asked the champions to rein in their manager, though that may not prevent the matter being raised at the next meeting of Premiership chairmen. Two of Ferguson's targets, Arsenal and Liverpool, have already made their displeasure known to the League, and the League is also unhappy about the criticism aimed at it by Ferguson.

After the Arsenal manager Arsène Wenger's objection to an extension to the season, Ferguson said: "Arsène Wenger has been in Japan. He doesn't know anything about English football and the demands of our game . . . maybe next year he could be in the same situation [as us]. He should keep his mouth shut, firmly shut."

Then Ferguson criticised Liverpool's objection to his extension plan. "If Liverpool or any other club had asked for support over such a backlog I am sure they would have got it," he said, "but there seems to be a certain amount of jealousy towards us. 'Why should we help Manchester United?' was the message I received."

On Sunday Ferguson criticised the decision to delay the start of Coventry's relegation decider at Tottenham after an M1 jam held up supporters. "That was an absolute disgrace," he said. "The Premier League? More like a tiddlywinks league."

Results

Soccer

WOMEN'S FRIENDLY (Portland, Oregon): US 6, England 0.

Rugby League

AUSTRALIAN SUPER LEAGUE: Canterbury 48 Hunter Mariners 36

Golf

ATLANTA CLASSIC (Duluth, Georgia): **Final scores** (US unless stated) **274** S McCarron 70 69, 66, 69 **277** L Janzen 69, 70 70 68, B Henninger 70 71, 63, 68; D Duval 66, 66, 73 72. **278** H Sutton 69, 74, 68, 67; G Norman (Aus) 70, 67, 73, 68; N Price (Zim) 66 67, 75, 70 D Toms 69, 68 70, 71. **280** K Sutherland 71, 71, 70 68, B Fleisher 70, 72, 70, 68, D Pooley 64, 70, 77, 69; J Haas 68 71 71, 70; A Magee 70, 71, 68 71 **282** F. Fergus 71, 69, 73, 69, R Freeman 70, 74, 69, 69; S Gump 69, 71, 70 72; K Gibson 73, 69 68, 72; B Estes 68 74, 68 72 **283** K Perry 70, 73, 72, 68 B Tway 72 68, 74 69; L Mize 71, 70 72, 70 T Pernice 70, 69, 73, 71, G Day 69, 72, 69, 73; B Glasson 69 70 69, 75.

WORLD RANKINGS: (US unless stated) 1, G Norman (Aus) 10 54pts average; 2, T Lehman 9 97, 3 S Elkington (Aus) 9 12; 4 N Price (Zim) 8 76 5 T Woods 8 73, 6, C Montgomerie (GB) 8 60; 7, M Ozaki (Japan) 8 36; 8, M O Meara 8 06, 9, E Els (SA) 8 03; 10, P Mickelson 6.98, 11, F Couples 6 95, 12, N Faldo (GB) 6 74; 13, S Hoch 6 63, 14, B Faxon 6.56, 15, B Langer (Ger) 6 55

Tennis

ATP AMERICA'S RED CLAY CHAMPIONSHIP (Coral Springs, Fla) **Final: J Stoltenberg** (Aus) bt J Bjorkman (Swe) 6–0 2–6 7–5

LTA SPRING SATELLITE MASTERS (Cardiff). **First round: P Langvardt** (Den) bt N Weal (GB) 6–1, 6–2. **D Reditt** (US) bt C Beecher (GB) 7–6, 6–2; **M Lee** (GB) bt P Hand (GB) 3–6 7–6 6–2 **M Bok** (Neth) bt S Barron (Ire) 6–1, 6–3; **J Delgado** (GB) bt M Maclagan (GB) 6–3 6–2; **V Spyman** (SA) bt T Spinks (GB) 4–6, 6–4 6–4, **I Neumuller** (Aut) bt C Auffray (Fr) 6–3, 6–3, **A Gonzalez** (Sp) bt M Smejda (Aut) 4–6, 7–6, 6–4

ATP ITALIAN OPEN (Rome) **First round: T Muster** (Aut) bt M Martelli (It) 6–3, 6–2, **M Rosset** (Switz) bt J Golmard (Fr) 7–5 6–4 **M-K Goellner** (Ger) bt J Stark (US) 7–6, 6–4. **C Woodruff** (US) bt D Prinosil (Ger) 6–3, 6–2 **E Alvarez** (Sp) bt F Clavet (Sp) 4–6 6–3 6–3; **R Krajicek** (Neth) bt D Nargiso (It) 7–5 6–3. **K Alami** (Mor) bt **M Philippoussis** (Aus) 6–2 6–0. **A Portas** (Sp) bt G Rusedski (GB) 7–6, 7–6, **A Boetsch** (Fr) bt A O Brien (US) 7–6 6–4, **J Siemerink** (Neth) bt J Tarango (US) 7–5 6–3 **F Santoro** (Fr) bt R Furlan (It) 6–4 6–1 **A Corretja** (Sp) bt H Arazi (Mor) 6–6, 6–3, **C Ruud** (Nor) bt F Fetterlein (Den) 6–4 7–5, **M Larsson** (Swe) bt W Ferreira (SA) 4–6 7–5, 7–6 **C Pioline** (Fr) bt B Black (Zim) 6–4 6–3

ATP TOUR RANKINGS: 1, P Sampras (US) 5,118pts 2 M Chang (US) 3 704, 3, T Muster (Aut) 3,261; 4, Y Kafelnikov (Rus) 3 002 5, R Krajicek (Neth) 2,881, 6, G Ivanisevic (Cro) 2,710, 7, T Enqvist (Swe) 2,178, 8 C Moya (Sp) 2 143, 9, M Rios (Chile) 2,072, 10, A Costa (Sp) 1,930; 11, W Ferreira (SA) 1,866 12, F Mantilla (Sp) 1,847; 13 B Becker (Ger) 1,765, 14 T Martin (US) 1 673 15, A Corretja (Sp) 1,650. **Also:** 18, T Henman (GB) 1 546

GERMAN WOMEN'S OPEN (Berlin): **First round: J Wiesner** (Aut) bt L Courtois (Bel) 6–0, 6–2, **R Dragomir** (Rom) bt N Zverova (Bela) 7–6, 6–2: **M Sanchez Lorenzo** (Sp) bt H Nagyova (Slova) 6–2, 4–6, 6–3; **C Rubin** (US) bt P Hy-Boulais (Can) 7–5 6–2; **G Pizzichini** (It) bt P Suarez (Arg) 7–6, 4–6, 6–1, **S Appelmans** (Bel) bt Y Makarova (Rus) 6–2, 7–6; **M Serna** (Sp) bt T Panova (Rus) 6–2, 7–6 **M-J Fernandez** (US) bt F Perfetti (It) 6–4, 3–6, 6–1: **L Neiland** (Lat) bt A-G Sidot (Fr) 6–3, 6–4; **N Tauziat** (Fr) bt A Glass (Ger) 6–7, 6–1, 6–1.

WTA RANKINGS: 1, M Hingis (Switz) 4674 0000pts: 2, S Graf (Ger) 4175.5000: 3, M Seles (US) 3568 8083; 4, J Novotna (Cz) 3313 4412; 5 L Davenport (US) 2910 0867; 6, A Sanchez Vicario (Sp) 2804 1871; 7, A Huber (Ger) 2701.0388; 8, C Martinez (Sp) 2628 1710, 9 I Majoli (Cro) 2514.2820, 10, A Coetzer (SA) 1991.7009.

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Boston 6, Texas 8; Detroit 11, Cleveland 3, Baltimore 9, Seattle 5, NY Yankees 3 Kansas C 2: Chicago 8, Oakland 5: Milwaukee 5, Anaheim 2: Minnesota 2, Toronto 3. **Leading standings: East Division:** 1, Baltimore (W23–L11–Pct.676–GB0); 2, NY Yankees (21–16–.568–3½). 3, Toronto (19–15–.559–4) **Central:** 1, Milwaukee (W18–L14–Pct.563–GB0); 2, Cleveland (17–17–.500–2): 3, Kansas C (17–17–.500–2). **West:** 1, Seattle (W21–L14–Pct .600–GB0). 2, Texas (19–14 .576–1); 3 Anaheim (14–19–.424–6) **NATIONAL LEAGUE:** Florida 6, Houston 3, Philadelphia 3, Colorado 1, Pittsburgh 2, Atlanta 8 : St Louis 4, Ny Mets 6 : Los Angeles 3 (10in). Montreal 6, San Diego 5, Cincinnati 4 (11in); San Francisco 11, Chicago 5. **Leading standings: East Division:** 1, Atlanta (W25–L11–Pct.694–GB0); 2, Florida (20–16–.556–5); 3, Montreal (18–16–.529–6) **Central Division:** 1, Houston (W20–L17–Pct.541–GB0); 2, Pittsburgh (19–17–.528–½). 3, St Louis (16–20–.444–3½) **West Division:** 1, San Francisco (W21–L13–.618–GB0); 2, Colorado (21–14–.600–½). 3, Los Angeles (20–14–.588–1).

Basketball

NBA: Second-round play-offs: Eastern Conference: Semi-finals: New York 77, Miami 73 (NY lead series 2–1). Chicago 89, Atlanta 80 (Chicago lead series 3–1) **Western Conference: Semi-final:** Houston 110, Seattle 106 (ot) (Houston lead series 3–1)

Chess

EUROPEAN TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS (Pula, Cro): **Round Six:** Armenia 1½, England 2½ (Short ½ Adams 1, Sadler ½, Hodgson ½); Croatia 1½ Russia 2½, Estonia 1, Hungary 3 **Leaders:** England 16, Hungary 15½, Russia 15, Armenia, Croatia 14½ **Women: Round Six:** Georgia 1½, Poland ½, Greece ½ England 1½ (Lalic ½, Hunt 1): Russia 2, Azerbaijan 0 **Leaders:** Georgia 10, England 9, Russia 8.

Ice Hockey

NHL: Stanley Cup: Second-round play-offs: Eastern Conference: Semi-finals: Philadelphia 6 Buffalo 3. (Philadelphia won series 4–1): NY Rangers 2, New Jersey 1 (ot) (NY won series 4–1).

Squash

LAS VEGAS WOMEN'S OPEN: Final: S Fitz-Gerald (Aus) bt L Irving (Aus) 9–3, 9–1, 9–4

Evening Racing

TOWCESTER

5.45 (2m): 1, THE FLYING DOCTOR, W McFarland (15–8 jt-fav). **2, Sterling Fellow** (15–8 jt-fav). **3, Summer Villa** (4–1) 7 ran 11 15 (G Balding) Tote: £2.60; £1.60, £1.50 Dual F £3 10 CSF: £5.29

6.15 (2m 110yds): 1, NOT MY LINE, Mr A Sansome (14–1). **2, My Young Man** (11–4); **3, Noctanebo** (8–1). 2–1 fav Yquem. 18 ran. 8, 10 (Andy Morgan) Tote: £24 10; £4.50, £1.70, £3.90. Dual F: £70.00. Trio: £70.50 CSF: £52.16

6.45 (2m 5f): 1, NORDIC SPREE, A P McCoy (3–1); **2, Luke Warm** (7–1); **3, Cambo** (7–2). 9–4 fav Mountain Path. 5 ran. 6, ¾. (G L Moore) Tote: £3.30; £2.00, £2.60. Dual F: £13.30. CSF: £19.78. NR: Moobakkr.

7.15 (3m 1f): 1, MAGNOLIA MAN, Mr N Harris (9–4); **2, Lucky Christopher** (7–4 fav); **3, Lepy Minstrel** (8–1). 6 ran. 5, 6. (Ms D Cole) Tote: £3.30; £1.70, £1.20. Dual F: £3.10. CSF: £6.56. NR: Fardross, Quailtair Memory.

7.45 (3m 1f): 1, BALLYDOUGAN, D Walsh (14–1); **2, Brogeen Lady** (7–2); **3, Grizzly Bear** (14–1). 7–4 fav Mr Pickpocket. 8 ran. Nk, 1¾. (R Mathew) Tote: £15.40; £2.10, £1.40, £4.30. Dual F: £19.00. CSF: £59 96.

8.15 (2m): 1, STORMYFAIRWEATHER, M A Fitzgerald (3–1 jt-fav); **2, Rythm Rock** (5–1); **3, Physical Fun** (3–1 jt-fav). 13 ran. 6, 5. (N Henderson) Tote: £4.40; £2.60, £1.40, £1.20. Dual F. £5.90. Trio: £3.20. CSF: £18.10.

QUADPOT: £14.50. **PLACEPOT:** £93.40.

WINDSOR

6.00 (1m 67yds): 1, SCATHEBURY, D Holland (9–2 fav); **2, Ludo** (9–1); **3, Mad Alex** (33–1). 18 ran. 1¾, 1¾. (K Burke) Tote: £4.40; £1.80, £8.50, £5.60. Dual F: £73.50. Trio. £178.60. CSF: £41.85.

6.30 (1m 3f 135yds): 1, RIGHT MAN, A Clark (9–1); **2, Kramo** (7–1 co-fav); **3, Dizzy Tilly** (33–1); **4, Sadoot** (7–1 co-fav). 7–1 co-fav Aficionado. 20. ran 3¾, ¾. (G Lewis) Tote: £8.80; £2.00, £2.10, £10.10. Dual F: £31.20. Trio: Not won. CSF: £80.42. Tricast: £1,864.13.

7.00 (5f 217yds): 1, STRAT'S QUEST, S Whitworth (20–1); **2, Heavenly Miss** (33–1), **3, Sally Green** (20–1); **4, Will To Win** (16–1). 6–1 fav Marsad. 25 ran. Hd, 1¾. (D Arbuthnot) Tote: £24 60; £5.90, £10.00, £8 90 Dual F: £684.40. Trio: £1,268.90. CSF: £522 12. Tricast: £11,546.60.

7.30 (1m 2f 7yds): 1, ROUFONTAINE, J Reid (4–1): **2, Zidac** (14–1); **3, Cedez Le Passage** (20–1). 100–30 fav Kota. 12 ran. 3, 2. (W Muir) Tote: £4.80; £1.60, £4.40, £3 70 Dual F £45 50. Trio: £159.40. CSF: £50.40 NR: Couchant.

8.00 (5f 10yds): 1, BANNINGHAM BLADE, Martin Dwyer (9–1); **2, Chips** (5–6 fav). **3, Golden Mirage** (7–1). 7 ran. Nk, hd. (K Ivory) Tote: £8.30; £3.40, £1.90. Dual F: £5 40. CSF: £15.17.

8.30 (1m 2f 7yds): 1, TOM TAILOR, L Dettori (9–2); **2, Sooes** (14–1); **3, In Question** (2–1 fav). 16 ran. 1, 1. (D Elsworth) Tote £5 00: £2.00, £4.70, £1.40. Dual F: £58 40. Trio: £32.70. CSF: £59.35.

QUADPOT: £185.10. **PLACEPOT:** £508.60.

Fixtures

Soccer

UEFA U-18 CHAMPIONSHIP: Intermediary round, second leg: Portugal v England (5.0).

N-W COUNTIES FLOODLIT TROPHY: Final: Newcastle Tn v Penrith (7.45, Clitheroe)

PONTINS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Man Utd v Stoke (7.0).

FRIENDLY MATCHES: Arsenal v Rangers (8.0): Sunderland v Liverpool (8.0).

Rugby League

INTERNATIONAL MATCH: France v Ireland (7.0, Bondoufle Std, Evry).

Sport in brief

Sailing

Team Dennis Conner 2000 has lodged a formal challenge for the America's Cup along with the £125,000 entry fee. Conner, who has won the trophy four times and lost twice, snubbed the San Diego YC by challenging through the city's Cortez Racing Association.

Chess

England retained a half-point lead with three rounds remaining in the 34-nation European team championships in Pula. Michael Adams scored the decisive winning point in a 2½–1½ victory over Armenia.

England's women, who have lost only to the world champions Georgia, beat Greece 1½–½ to stay in second place.

Olympic Games

The British team will locate their training camp on Australia's Gold Coast for the 2000 Games in Sydney.

Team talk

The independent news and reports service

0891 33 77+

Arsenal	06	Ipswich Town	19	Sheffield United	15
Aston Villa	11	Leeds United	03	Sheffield Wed.	14
Birm. City	34	Leicester City	35	Southhampton	20
Blackburn	21	Liverpool	04	Stoke City	30
Bolton	36	Man. City	02	Sunderland	27
Brentford	24	Man. United	01	Tottenham Hot.	07
Burnley	31	Middlesbrough	23	West Ham	12
Chelsea	08	Millwall	29	Wimbledon	26
Coventry City	17	Newcastle Utd	16	Wolves	37
Derby County	28	Norwich City	18	Celtic	09
Everton	05	Nottm. Forest	13	Rangers	10
Hudd. Town	32	QPR	25		

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

هكذا من الأصل

Cricket

David Hopps finds the Australians arriving awesomely fit to defend the Ashes — but carrying a chink in their armour as captain

Taylor gives England a target

NOT so long ago, the prime objective of an Australian cricketer on a long-haul flight to London was to offset the rigours of jet lag with a renewed assault on the world in-flight beer-drinking record.

No longer. With the help of a stopover in Hong Kong, the tourists arrived in London so chipper yesterday that within hours they were desperate only to look at the world from the inside of a gymnasium.

Only one player wore that familiar washed-out look, but for Australia's captain Mark Taylor it was induced neither by alcohol nor jet lag, but more a run of batting failures that has hit his chances of surviving the summer. Going 11 hours back in time is no problem when, with no Test half-century in 20 knocks, he would happily have another go at the past 11 months.

Instead, Taylor wakes up every morning to the hellish suspicion that the clock has again been turned back 24 hour and he must once more endure the same debilitating questions. However politely they are phrased — and they invariably are, because Taylor is a deservedly popular and respected figure — they add up to the same thing: Have You Lost It? How Much Longer Can You Hang On?

Taylor looks drawn. His eyes dart around with self-doubt, the obligatory phrases tumble out automatically. "My form has been terrible," he intoned at Australia's opening press conference at a West End hotel. "But I'm glad to be back in England and hope that the series will turn my form round. You're only ever one innings away from finding it again."

Steve Waugh, not so much vice-captain as captain-in-waiting, sat alongside him impassively. At times such as this, Waugh might have been chosen for his inscrutability.

In the three weeks since his official reappointment Taylor has addressed his mental exhaustion, calculating that any technical shortcomings will look after themselves. He has done some fishing and, it seems, has managed to hit the river more often than not.

"The first time I picked up a bat was two days ago when I put it into my coffin," he said. He is courageously trying to consider his failures in the past tense. "I needed a break. The harder I tried, the worse things became. It was becoming a struggle."

He has also managed to "spend some time with the family" and just about managed to say so without sounding like a British cabinet minister contemplating the end of his career. He can expect to see still more of them; whereas England barred wives and families throughout last winter, to great disgruntlement, Australia will welcome them from the second Test onwards. "We tour so much these days, it is impossible to expect anything different," said the wicket-keeper Ian Healy.

Australia lost their last Test, in South Africa, England won their last two, in New Zealand, but the last four Ashes series provide a more galling perspective: Australia lead 14 Tests to two, with six drawn. However much Taylor diplomatically refers to the series "beginning at 0-0", he expects to win easily and will willingly resign if his plight becomes disruptive.

Nevertheless, England's best chance of fashioning a convincing Ashes challenge is to target Taylor at every opportunity, following the doctrine that, if you cut off the head, the body will follow.

If the situation were reversed and Australian state sides were presented with Michael Atherton in such confusion, they would relish the chance to force his resignation. It has become customary, though, for English counties to field weakened sides against the tourists, to allow leading players a rest.

Taylor insists that he is one innings away from salvation and believes that nowhere is he more likely to find it than in England. Should the counties prove all too accommodating, it will be another indictment of the English first-class system.

Taylor . . . in the horrors

B&H Cup: Northants v Leicestershire

Snape wins Gold Award for teasing

Mike Selvey at Northampton

CONSIDERING the desolate ambiance that once hung over Wantage Road, its gradual transformation into a county ground of some character continues to surprise. The old football stands have long gone, of course, and there are ambitious plans for an indoor school on the site. On Sunday, too, the spanking new Dennis Brookes Gates at that same end were opened for the first time, and very efficient they were, preventing any early getaways from a lacklustre finish to the zonal rounds of the competition.

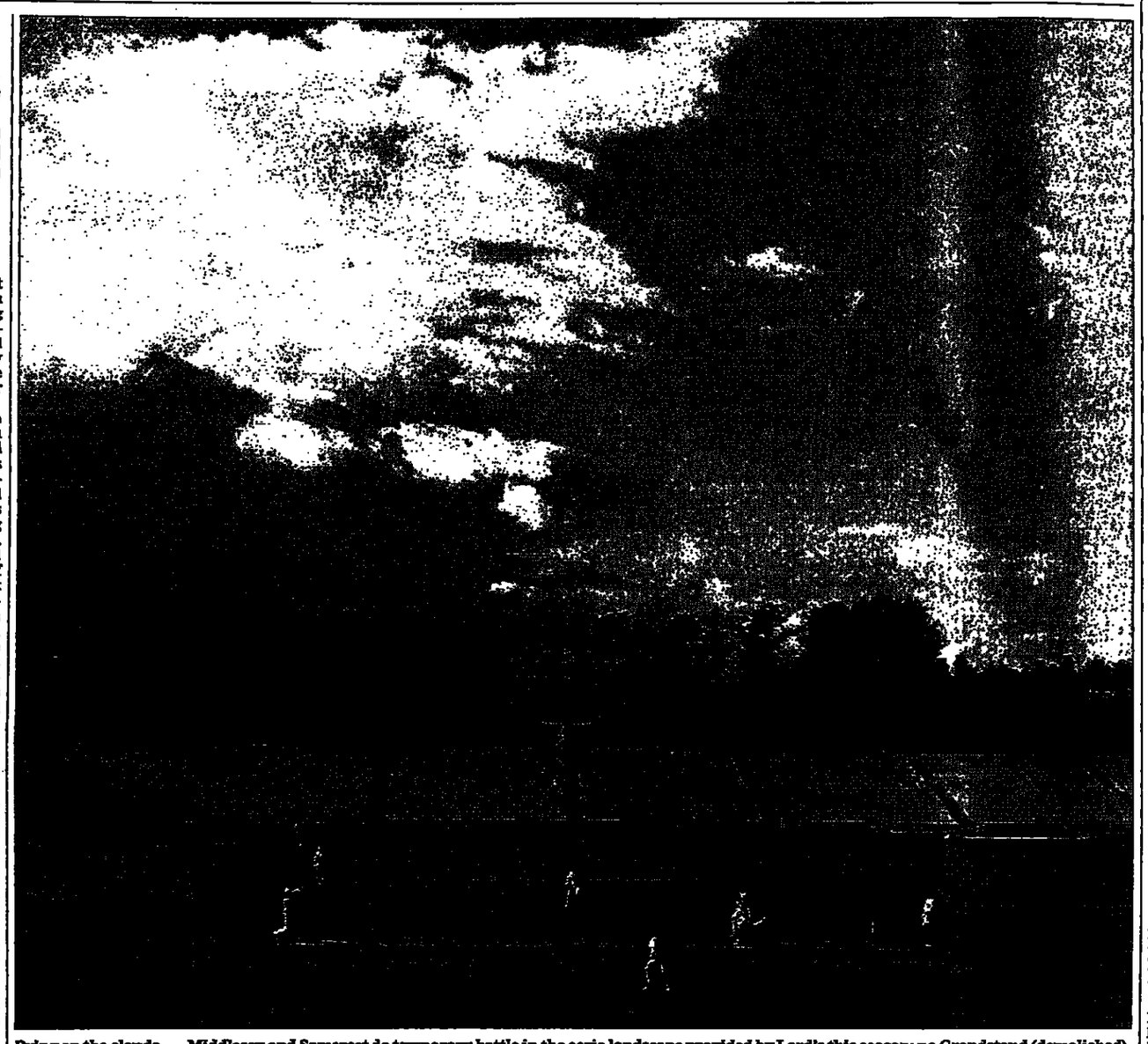
The nature of the match will not have bothered Northamptonshire one jot, however, the end justifying the means as they beat Leicestershire comfortably enough by 52 runs to haul themselves ahead of Durham and qualify for the knockout stages beginning in a fortnight. Leicestershire, who had not progressed beyond the round-robin stage since its reinstatement four seasons ago, remain top of Group B by virtue of a superior run-rate and will take a home quarter-final draw as a result.

Northants' match-winner was Jeremy Snape, who bowled his off-spin with teasing skill to take five for 32 from his full 10-over quota, including the Leicester captain James Whitaker and their overseas player and top scorer Neil Johnson with successive deliveries, during a spell of three wickets in eight balls that killed off any hopes Leicestershire might have retained of a clean sweep of their qualifying games. It was an obvious decision to hand him the Gold Award and it will sit nicely alongside the one he won five years ago when playing for Combined Universities.

Neither side batted with any confidence on a pitch lacking consistent pace and bounce, but Leicestershire's effort was the more hamfisted, only Darren Maddy and Johnson coming to terms with the demands of chasing a moderate target of 239. Maddy played some assured off-side strokes, making 42 of 66 added for the first wicket before he clipped John Emburey to midwicket in his opening over; and Johnson, the South African given the unenviable task of filling the boots of the mighty Phil Simmons, hit six fours in his 58 and for a while looked capable of carrying the day for Leicestershire.

The decisive stage of the game came after Snape had dismissed Aftab Habib and Ben Smith in his first six overs. His eighth saw his gleeful acceptance of a return catch from Paul Nixon, and his penultimate over brought the downfall first of Whitaker, who had come in down the order because of a finger injury and drilled a catch low to Kevin Curran at long off, and then the left-handed Johnson, who toe-ended a near full toss to midwicket.

Earlier Northants had failed to capitalise on some ordinary Leicestershire bowling, with Capel, Loye, Bailey and Penberthy failing to build on their start.



Bring on the clouds . . . Middlesex and Somerset do temporary battle in the eerie landscape provided by Lord's this season: no Grandstand (demolished), no Father Time (moved), only the new ranks of white, unoccupied seats and an unaccustomed view over St John's Wood of the approaching storm that ended yesterday's play after only 38 overs, with the visitors well placed on 172 for four and Peter Bowler unbeaten on 54 PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

Surrey v Sussex

Salisbury's ironic turn of events

David Foot at The Oval

IT WAS suspiciously like the ultimate irony. Ian Salisbury, who had chosen to leave Hove at the end of last season in the general contentious spirit of departure, stopped Sussex in their exuberant tracks yesterday in a continuously swinging match.

Salisbury had posed no threat at all with his early overs but as Sussex suddenly produced a thrilling chase for the line he turned the game Surrey's way with an astonishing spell.

The leg-spinner took four for four in half a dozen balls, three of the wickets falling in a single over, separated by one delivery which went for two. Mark Newell, bowled for an excellent 80, Bill Athey going for an alien slog, Nicky Phillips and Amer Khan all disappeared in a trice with Surrey by then scenting victory.

There was still hope as Paul Jarvis swung a six and two fours in an over from Ben Hollioake, but Martin Thornfield was run out and soon afterwards, quite needlessly, Mark Robinson perished the same way.

Salisbury did enough to win the Gold Award and it would be churlish to dwell on a late dropped catch. Jarvis, who also took four wickets, for 44, was hovering as a late candidate for honours but there were plenty of jaunty batting performances too.

One came from Neil Taylor, who found himself involved in the day's only moment of controversy. Every Surrey player appeared convinced that he had been caught at the wicket off Jason Ratcliffe, and it led to a rebuke directed at Alec Stewart by umpire Graham Burgess.

Stewart said: "I was only trying to calm things down. The umpire had a pop at me and a couple of overs later he apologised." There is to be no official report on the incident.

Put in to bat, Surrey galloped away in a style which suggested Alistair Brown and Stewart had an eloquent point or two to make on the day the Australians arrived. They put on 101 for the first wicket, with a Texaco-inclined purpose, even though the bowling was hardly tourist class.

Brown, Stewart, surprisingly succumbing to mid-off when going so well, Graham Thorpe and Mark Butcher took the bowling apart in ominous rotation. The mood had been set when Jarvis went for 10 in the opening over and Khan conceded three fours in the second.

For a team so depleted by injuries, Sussex offered a spirited, defiant response. Keith Greenfield was spectacularly run out by Brown, and Rajesh Rao reached his half-century at about a run a ball. After them came Taylor's breezy 67, with two sixes, and a further notable innings by Newell which seemed to mock his lack of experience with only one Championship match to his name.

In the end Surrey won by 11 runs with seven balls to spare. They are assured of a place in the quarter-finals; in fact, however heroic the Sussex innings had been, there was realistically very little in it for them.

Moody blues as Lancashire sneak home

DESPITE his Worcestershire side falling by the narrowest of margins to stop Lancashire in their tracks yesterday, Tom Moody reminded the newly arrived Australian tourists what they are missing when he took the fight to the Benson & Hedges Cup holders' bowlers at Old Trafford yesterday.

Moody hit 11 fours and three sixes in a virtuoso 92 as he and Graeme Hick put on 131 in 17 overs for the second wicket. Both fell to Peter Martin within three balls, though, and despite Moody's county being in a commanding position chasing 274 for six, a late-order collapse meant they could manage only 274 for eight off their 50 overs.

Lancashire won by virtue of losing fewer wickets, but they were eliminated from the competition through an inferior run-rate and Yorkshire's win.

Anthony McGrath of Yorkshire hit a competition-best 109 not out as his side crushed the Minor Counties by 184 runs to effectively secure themselves a quarter-final tie at Headingley.

Yorkshire made 309 for five from their 50 overs despite being pegged back at 135 for four at one stage.

The Gold Award winner McGrath, who faced 85 deliveries, struck three sixes and eight fours to dominate the closing stages when he contributed 79 of final 112 runs.

Even so the Minor Counties tried to seize back the initiative, Steve Dean and Wayne Larkins beginning with a 63-stand from 13 overs. Dean went on to reach 56 from 52 balls, scoring 11 fours in the process, but Craig White's burst of three for seven in nine balls helped the last seven wickets tumble for 20 runs.

Scotland, Ireland and Derbyshire will try again today after rain washed out play at all three games yesterday.

Scoreboard

Benson & Hedges Cup

SURREY v SUSSEX

The Oval: Surrey won by 11 runs.

SURREY

A D Brown c Greenfield b Thornfield	40
*A J Stewart c Phillips b Thornfield	72
G P Thorpe c Thornfield b Greenfield	75
M A Butcher c Moores b Jarvis	48
†A J Hollioake lbw b Jarvis	8
B C Hollioake c Moores b Jarvis	16
J D Ratcliffe c & b Khan	0
I D K Salisbury low b Jarvis	3
N Shahid not out	20
M P Bicknell not out	2
Extras (b1, lb13, w9)	23
Total (for 8, 50 overs)	310

Fall of wickets: 101, 135, 247, 260, 267, 270, 273, 300.

Did not bat: J E Benjamin.

Bowlings: Jarvis 10–1–60–4; Khan 10–0–70–1; Robinson 5–0–54–0; Thornfield 5–0–49–2; Phillips 10–0–46–0; Greenfield 3–0–17–1.

SUSSEX

K Greenfield run out	44
R K Rao b Ratcliffe	67
N R Taylor c Butcher b Ratcliffe	67
†A Newell b Salisbury	80
C W J Athey b Salisbury	20
*P Moores b Benjamin	5
P W Jarvis not out	17
N C Phillips b Salisbury	0
A A Khan lbw b Salisbury	2
M J Thornfield run out	2
M A Robinson run out	0
Extras (lb10, w5, nb6)	21
Total (for , 48.5 overs)	299

Fall of wickets: 93, 151, 206, 268, 275, 277, 277, 279, 293.

Bowlings: Bicknell 10–0–59–0; Benjamin 10–0–60–1; B C Hollioake 4.5–0–43–0; A J Hollioake 5–0–32–0; Salisbury 10–0–53–4; Ratcliffe 9–0–42–2.

Umpires: G I Burgess and K E Palmer.

YORKSHIRE v MINOR COUNTIES

Headingley: Yorkshire won by 184 runs.

YORKSHIRE

*D Byas c & b Oakes	72
M P Vaughan b Oakes	15
D S Lehmann c Larkins b Lendal	34
P J Hartley c Nicholson b Oakes	0
A McGrath not out	109
C White c Gaywood b Sharp	24
†R J Blakey not out	22
Extras (b1, lb8, w17, nb6)	32
Total (for 5, 50 overs)	309

Fall of wickets: 70, 128, 128, 135, 197.

Did not bat: B Parker, D Gough, C E W Silverwood, R D Stemp.

Bowlings: Murphy 10–0–60–0; Sharp 10–0–35–1; Oakes 10–0–50–2; Lendal 10–0–70–1.

MINOR COUNTIES

S J Dean b White	56
W Larkins b White	15
N R Gaywood c McGrath b Vaughan	30
*I Cockbain b White	0
J P J Sylvester b Stemp	6
R N Dalton c Lehmann b Stemp	0
S V Laudat b Hartley	4
†P J Nicholson lbw b Hartley	0
M A Sharp c Gough b Stemp	1
S Oakes lbw b Silverwood	0
A J Murphy not out	0
Extras (lb2, w5, nb6)	13
Total (33.3 overs)	125

Fall of wickets: 63, 77, 77, 105, 105, 123, 123, 124, 125.

Bowlings: Gough 6–0–25–0; Silverwood 5–0–26–1; White 7–1–22–3; Hartley 6–0–28–2; Stemp 9–3–22–3; Vaughan 0.3–0–0–1.

Umpires: M J Kitchen and A A Jones.

LANCASHIRE v WORCESTERSHIRE

Old Trafford: Lancashire won by losing fewer wickets.

LANCASHIRE

J E R Gallian lbw b Hick	59
M A Atherton c Weston b Newport	6
J P Crawley c Moody b Leatherdale	57
N H Fairbrother not out	75
G D Lloyd b Sheriyar	22
I D Austin run out	25
*Wasim Akram b Newport	4
†W K Hegg not out	9
Extras (lb8, w5, nb4)	27
Total (for 6, 50 overs)	274

Fall of wickets: 20, 100, 124, 193, 237, 247.

Did not bat: P J Martin, G Yates, R J Green.

Bowlings: Newport 9–1–45–2; Haynes 10–1–55–0; Sheriyar 10–0–65–1; Brinkley 2–0–18–0; Hick 9–0–42–1; Leatherdale 10–0–41–1.

WORCESTERSHIRE

*T M Moody c Yates b Martin	92
W P C Weston c Hegg b Wasim	6
G A Hick c Hegg b Martin	40
G R Haynes c Atherton b Martin	39
V S Solanki lbw b Yates	20
K R Spiring not out	32
D A Leatherdale run out	7
†S J Rhodes lbw b Austin	0
P J Newport c Green b Wasim	12
Extras (lb8, w14, nb5)	26
Total (for 8, 50 overs)	274

Fall of wickets: 25, 156, 156, 196, 235, 245, 248, 274.

Did not bat: J E Brinkley, A Sheriyar.

Bowlings: Wasim 10–1–31–2; Austin 10–0–42–1; Martin 10–0–56–3; Green 7–0–53–0; Yates 10–0–71–1; Gallian 3–1–15–0.

Umpires: B J Meyer and P Willey.

NORTHANTS v LEICS

Northampton: Northamptonshire won by 52 runs.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

D J Capel c Smith b Johnson	20
M B Loye c Nixon b Millns	47
*R J Bailey c Parsons b Brimson	29
K M Curran c & b Parsons	0
A L Penberthy c Maddy b Mullally	38
T C Walton not out	38
J N Snape run out	2
†D Ripley st Nixon b Brimson	9
J E Emburey c Millns b Johnson	13
Mohammad Akram not out	0
Extras (b7, lb13, w17, nb2)	38
Total (for 8, 50 overs)	236

Fall of wickets: 73, 105, 107, 152, 178, 186, 201, 233.

Did not bat: J P Taylor.

Bowlings: Mullally 10–2–27–1; Millns 10–1–44–1; Johnson 10–0–51–2; Parsons 10–0–38–1; Brimson 9–0–49–2; Maddy 1–0–8–0.

LEICESTERSHIRE

D L Maddy c Bailey b Emburey	42
G I Macmillan c Ripley b Capel	12
A Habib c Emburey b Snape	25
N C Johnson c Walton b Snape	58
B F Smith c & b Snape	11
†P A Nixon c & b Snape	10
*J J Whitaker c Curran b Snape	0
G J Parsons c Ripley b Bailey	4
D J Millns not out	3
A D Mullally not out	0
Extras (lb10, w3, nb2)	21
Total (for 9, 50 overs)	186

Fall of wickets: 66, 88, 127, 150, 172, 178, 178, 186.

Did not bat: M T Brimson.

Bowlings: Mohammad Akram 8–1–34–0; Taylor 9–1–17–0; Capel 6–0–19–1; Emburey 10–1–32–1; Snape 10–1–32–5; Curran 8–0–41–0; Bailey 1–0–1–1.

Umpires: J Baldarstone and D Shepherd.

BRITISH UNIVS v HAMPSHIRE

The Parks: Hampshire won by seven wickets.

BRITISH UNIVERSITIES

T P Hodgson c Udal b Stephenson	113
A J Strauss lbw b Renshaw	1
U B A Rashid c Aymes b Hayden	82
*A Singh lbw b Hayden	3
W J House c James b Udal	37
M J Chilton c Aymes b Stephenson	6
J A Ford c Udal b Renshaw	4
†T M B Bailey run out	13
A D Edwards not out	0
Extras (lb15, w6)	23
Total (for 8, 50 overs)	284

Fall: 6, 174, 191, 244, 257, 266, 272, 284.

Did not bat: P S Jones, S A J Boswell.

Bowlings: Renshaw 9–0–54–2; Maru 10–1–35–0; Stephenson 10–0–47–2; James 3–0–18–0; Udal 8–0–55–1; Whitaker 1–0–15–0; Hayden 9–0–45–2.

HAMPSHIRE

G W White st Bailey b Jones	56
M L Hayden not out	120
R A Smith c Hodgson b Chilton	45
W S Kendall lbw b Jones	20
*J P Stephenson not out	25
Extras (lb6, w3, nb2)	11
Total (for 3, 48.3 overs)	287

Fall of wickets: 95, 193, 224.

Did not bat: P Whitaker, †A Aymes, S D Udal, R Maru, S J Renshaw, K James.

Bowlings: Boswell 8.3–0–47–0; Edwards 10–0–56–0; Jones 10–1–51–2; Chilton 9–0–55–1; Rashid 10–0–62–0.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE v KENT

Bristol: Abandoned for day, rain. Today: 11.0.

KENT

T R Ward b Smith	2
M V Fleming c Alleyne b Young	4
A P Wells c Lynch b Alleyne	12
G R Cowdrey st Russell b Davis	77
N J Llong run out	49
M A Ealham b Davis	8
P A Strang not out	38
*†S A Marsh b Young	27
M J McCague not out	7
Extras (lb11, w4)	15
Total (for 7, 50 overs)	239

Fall: 6, 6, 39, 141, 151, 168, 228.

Did not bat: T N Wren, D W Headley.

Bowlings: Smith 10–3–32–1; Young 8–0–48–2; Davis 10–1–48–2; Alleyne 5–0–24–1; Hancock 5–0–23–0; Ball 10–0–53–0.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

M A Lynch not out	17
A J Wright not out	4
Extras (lb3, w1)	4
Total (for 0, 4.2 overs)	25

To bat: R J Cunliffe, S Young, *M W Alleyne, R I Dawson, †R C Russell, T H C Hancock, M C J Ball, A M Smith, R P Davis.

Bowlings: McCague 2.2–0–12–0; Headley 2–0–10–0.

MIDDLESEX v SOMERSET

Lord's: Rain stopped play, today 11.0.

SOMERSET

M N Lathwell c Weekes b Hewitt	0
M Burns c Mollet b Fraser	54
S C Ecclestone b Hewitt	9
*†P D Bowler not out	54
G D Rose c Gatting b Kallis	9
R J Harden not out	17
Extras (b4, lb9, w16)	29
Total (for 4, 56 overs)	172

Fall of wickets: 0, 17, 125, 145.

To bat: †R J Turner, K A Parsons, J I D Kerr, S Herzberg, A R Caddick.

Bowlings: Hewitt 8–1–37–2; Fay 7–0–27–0; Fraser 10–1–28–1; Johnson 10–0–50–0; Kallis 3–0–22–1.

MIDDLESEX: P N Weekes, J H Kallis, S P Mollet, *M W Gatting, J C Pooley, †K R Brown, K P Dutch, R A Fay, J P Hewitt, R L Johnson, A R C Fraser.

No play, rain

(Today: 11.0)

Derby: Derbyshire v Warwickshire.

Downpatrick: Ireland v Essex.

Edinburgh: Scotland v Nottinghamshire.

Bain Hogg Trophy

Portsmouth: Somerset 154 (Taylor 5–41). Hampshire 158–7 (D Lane 57no). Hampshire won by three wickets.

Uxbridge: Lancashire 173–8 (S P Titchard 64no). Durham 177–4 (S Hutton 88). Durham won by six wickets.

Leicester: Leicestershire 229–7 (D I Stevens 82no). Middlesex 123–8. Leicestershire won by 106 runs.

Worcester: Gloucestershire 128–6. Worcestershire 129–0 (T S Curtis 57no, C J Schofield 52no). Worcestershire won by 10 wickets.

Starting today

SECOND ELEVEN CHAMPIONSHIP (four days; 11.0)

Trent Bridge: Nottinghamshire v Derbyshire.

Hove: Sussex v Surrey.

BAIN HOGG TROPHY (one day: 11.0)

Old Trafford/Westbury: Gloucestershire v Glamorgan.

Maidstone: Kent v Essex.

● Sri Lanka, West Indies and South Africa will play in a four-nation limited-overs tournament in Pakistan in November. The week-long competition, to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of Pakistan, will form an interlude between the hosts' separate three-Test series against South Africa and West Indies.

Motor Racing

Prost sets sights on Hill

Alan Henry on the prospects of a move to France for Britain's struggling champion

DAMON HILL has been targeted by his former Williams team-mate Alain Prost to drive for the Frenchman's recently bought Formula One team next season.

"The fact that people in the paddock are talking in terms of Hill and Prost is very positive," said the Frenchman, "because it means our team is gaining credibility. Those people are right; I will be keeping in touch with Damon, but I think it is a little bit too soon to come to any firm decision.

"I have been a fan of his since we both drove for Williams in 1993. We worked very well together there."

Prost, who won the last of his four world championships that season, aims to turn the former Ligier team, which he bought three months ago, into a winning operation and he has already secured factory Peugeot engines from the start of next season.

A move to Prost, for whom Olivier Panis finished fourth at Monaco, might also give fresh impetus to Hill's career. The 37-year-old reigning world champion, driving for Tom Walkinshaw's Arrows-Yamaha team, has failed to score a single point in the first five races of 1997. On Sunday he was forced to retire after a second-lap collision, leaving him a long way short of his father Graham's record of five victories in the principality.

"I am not a man who likes swapping about between teams," said Hill. "I like continuity, which in this business is a valuable quality. Yes, it has been difficult this season, but it often takes two or three years to put together a competitive partnership. I am still thinking about how to improve things for this season, but I realise that soon I must start considering my plans for next year."

Whatever Walkinshaw and his new technical director John Barnard have in the pipeline for 1998, it will almost certainly not involve this year's Yamaha engine. The most likely option is a switch to the Mugen-Honda engines currently used by Prost, or the Mecachrome-prepared Renault V10s in an attempt to go head-to-head with the similarly equipped Williams team.

Hill's name has also been linked with Benetton and McLaren. Benetton might benefit from the Englishman's astute talents as a test and development driver to help lift them from their current performance trough. But the fact that McLaren have recruited the former Williams chief designer Adrian Newey, a long-time Hill fan, has increased speculation that he might find a berth in the Mercedes-powered cars.

McLaren International's managing director Ron Dennis, however, though conceding that Hill was a proven winner and therefore worthy of consideration, added: "It's all too easy to make decisions about driver changes on a spontaneous basis. Taking an objective view, I can't see any obvious reason to change our drivers. Both Mika [Hakkinen] and David [Coulthard] have the potential to get the job done. All we have to do is give them the best car."

Dennis made those remarks before his two drivers spun out of the Monaco Grand Prix together on the second lap. Even so, he is a loyal man who keeps his nerve. Just as Hill must keep his for the next few months, and calmly assess the best opportunities available to him.

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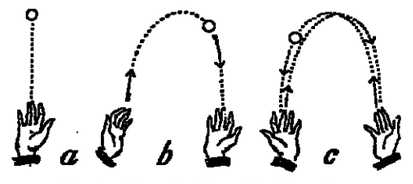

Fig. 6. The principles of Ball Juggling.

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St Helens red-faced over Goulding, page 13

The humbling of Garry Kasparov, page 14

Taylor's Australians talk tough, page 15

Prost coy over Damon Hill rumours, page 15

SportsGuardian

ANFIELD CLEAR-OUT BEGINS

Collymore off to Villa as Evans accepts £7m bid

Ian Ross on the imminent departure of Liverpool's *enfant terrible* after two seasons

STAN COLLYMORE's brief and tempestuous Liverpool career is expected to end today with his sale to Aston Villa for £7 million.

A deal first mooted more than six months ago was set in motion on Sunday evening, only 22 months after Collymore's arrival from Nottingham Forest for £8.5 million, a then British transfer record.

Shortly after Liverpool's 1–1 draw with Sheffield Wednesday at Hillsborough the 26-year-old Collymore was told that Villa's manager Brian Little had officially lodged a bid which was deemed acceptable by the Merseyside club's board.

When the former England striker learned that Liverpool's manager Roy Evans had also agreed to his departure, he telephoned Little to strike a non-binding verbal agreement which is dependent upon personal terms. He met Little in Birmingham yesterday lunchtime and if his demands are realised he will become the most expensive player in Villa's 123-year history.

Little had offered £4.5 million for Collymore in October, a bid which Evans described at the time as "laughable and derisory".

Yet Evans's oft-repeated claim that Collymore would remain at Anfield to see out the remaining two years of his contract always had a hollow ring to it and, as the gulf between manager and player widened, a parting of the ways became almost inevitable.

Collymore has enjoyed a healthy rapport with much of Liverpool's patient support, but many of his team-mates are believed to be dismayed by his apparent lack of respect for the traditions of one of world football's most celebrated institutions.

Having initially declined to move from his home in Cannock — only 30 minutes' drive from Villa Park — Collymore missed several training sessions, citing motorway congestion or his mother's ill health as the reasons.

In 1995 he was also rebuked by Liverpool after criticising aspects of the club and management in a magazine article. In November of last year he was fined £30,000 after refusing to play for the reserves against Tranmere Rovers, a no-show which must now be regarded as a defining *moment* in his spell at Anfield.

In 78 senior appearances for Liverpool he scored 34 goals, a fair return for a player in a partnership with the prolific Robbie Fowler.

Collymore is unlikely to be the only prominent player to leave Anfield before the start of next season. Having finished only fourth in the Premiership, seven points adrift of the champions Manchester United, Liverpool will now seek to offload at least four other players regarded as surplus to requirements. Neil Ruddock, John Barnes, Phil Babb and Steve Harkness are the men most under threat.

Evans's first target will be Wimbledon's £3 million-rated Norwegian international midfielder Oyvind Leonhardsen.

Moving the goalposts . . . Collymore is talking terms with Villa PHOTOGRAPH: ROY BEARDSWORTH

Inter pay rise in two-year deal may keep Ince in Italy after all

THE scramble to sign Paul Ince took another unexpected turn yesterday when his own club, Internazionale, entered the bidding, *writes Ian Ross.*

Although it had been assumed that the 29-year-old midfielder would return to England this summer, Inter have offered him a new two-year contract which would take his basic salary from £22,000 a week to around £34,000.

Ince had decided to delay an announcement about his plans after learning that none of London's five Premiership clubs were interested in signing him. Everton, though, have declared an interest and Blackburn Rovers, Liverpool and Leeds United are being kept informed of developments.

Slaven Bilic will move from West Ham to Everton tomorrow for £4.5 million in a deal effectively ratified almost two months ago.

With Kevin Keegan having refused the Everton manager's job, the chairman Peter Johnson is refusing to concede that his pursuit of the Barcelona coach Bobby Robson is in vain and at the end of this month he may again invite the former England manager to fill the vacancy.

Waddle agents go on trial in France in their absence

MEL STEIN and Len Lazarus, the joint representatives of Paul Gascoigne and Chris Waddle, are being tried in their absence in France on suspicion of being involved in illegal transfer activity.

A court in Marseille is to consider accusations that the former president of Olympique Marseille, Bernard Tapie, was involved in frauds totalling more than £11 million.

Waddle moved to Marseille from Tottenham for £4.25 million in 1989. Stein and Lazarus act as lawyer and accountant respectively for the player, who is now with Sunderland.

Stein said yesterday that any allegations of illegality over the transfer were "ridiculous". He added: "I can only assume that somebody has packed up a mass of lies in France and, because we're conveniently not there, we're the right people to blame."

Full report, page 14

Fifty years on, the myth is flourishing

Richard Williams

OF ALL the many stories told during the celebrations of Ferrari's 50th anniversary this month, the best came from Maurice Trintignant. Now almost 80, the vineyard owner, small-town mayor and former grand prix driver described his two years with the Italian team — during which he won the 1955 round-the-houses race at Monaco — as the happiest of his career. But he also had an anecdote which perfectly explained the strange attraction of the myth built by Enzo Ferrari.

At the beginning of his 1955 season, Trintignant remembered, Ferrari ordered his drivers to attend a test session at Imola. On the appointed morning, there they were — the young Englishman Mike Hawthorn, the corpulent Argentinian Froilan Gonzalez and the wiry little Frenchman Trintignant — present and correct under the eye of the veteran team manager, Nello Ugolini.

"Where," Trintignant asked Ugolini, "is Ferrari?"

"He's not coming," Ugolini replied. "He only goes to the tests at Modena and Monza."

Each driver proceeded to drive 190 miles — representing a tankful of petrol — observed by Ugolini and the mechanics. But late in the afternoon, as the last of them drew into the pits, a tall figure with a hooked nose and white hair materialised. It was Ferrari.

"He'd been hiding all through the session," Trintignant said, "watching us from various points around the track."

And the *padrone* proceeded to offer advice to his pilots. He told Gonzalez, the Pampas Bull, to get rid of his paunch. He told Hawthorn to cut down on the gin-and-tonics. And he told Trintignant that he would win the race in Monaco.

The myth is concerned with shiny red cars and heroic deeds, but its real resonance — the reason we think of Ferrari when we think of racing cars, rather than of Maserati or Benetton — comes from its darker side.

Ferrari have lasted longer than any other grand prix team — 575 races since 1950, with 109 wins — thanks to Enzo's lack of scruple. Until the day he died, almost nine years ago, nothing could stand in the way of his obsession. Not humiliation, not tragedy, not even the Vatican.

Having been condemned by one papacy when the Spanish aristocrat Alfonso de Portago killed himself, his co-driver and 10 spectators driving a Ferrari sports car in the 1957 Mille Miglia, Enzo lived just long enough to see a later pope visit the Maranello factory, laying his hands on a Formula One car and bestowing God's blessing upon its drivers.

If Enzo could see off the Vatican, his drivers were child's play. Hero after hero left the team in disgrace, feeling they had merely been used to prove his theory that the cars were far more important than the men who drove them. Fangio, Surtees and Lauda were among those whose reputations Ferrari tried to tarnish.

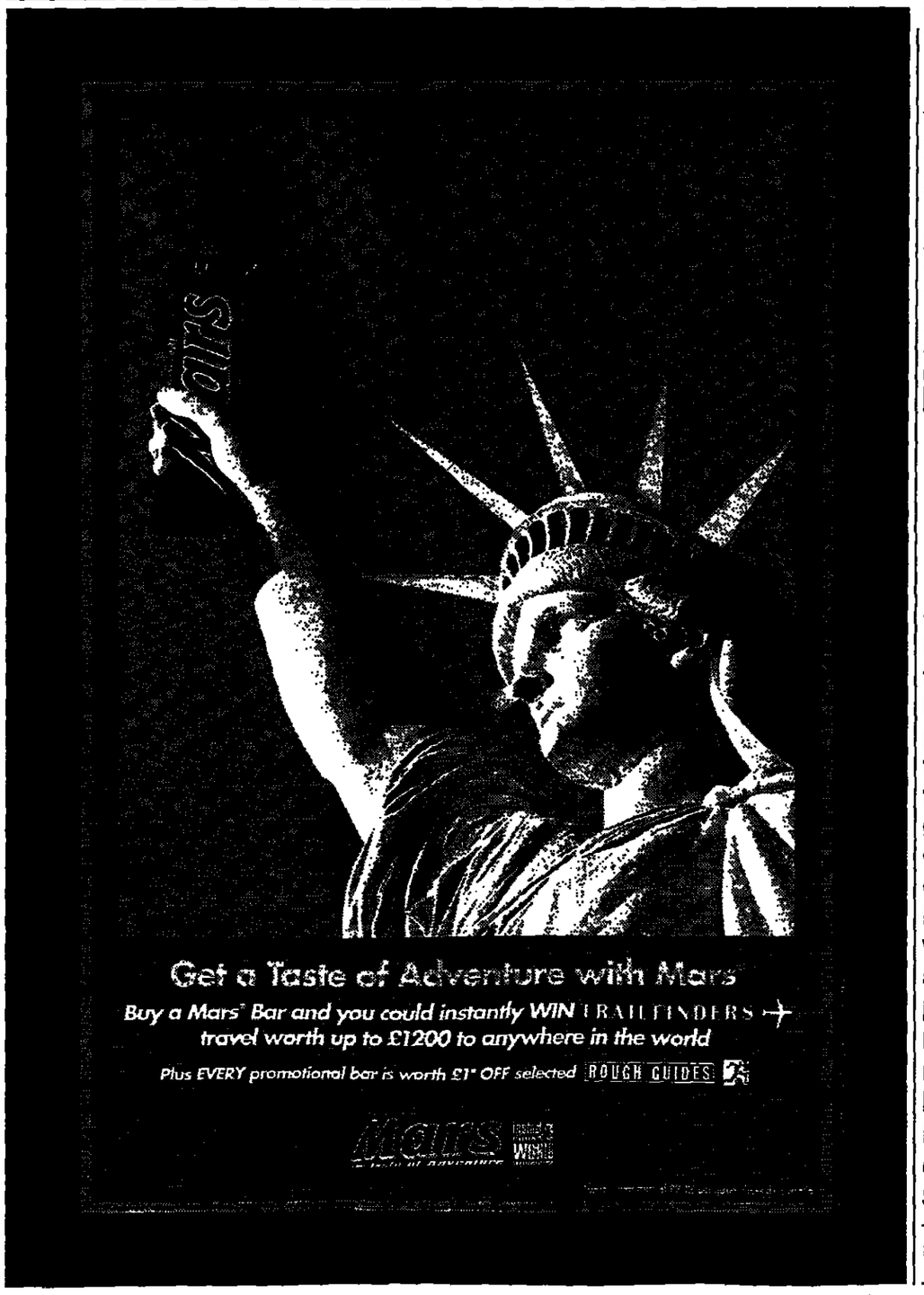
In an era when the life expectancy of a grand prix driver matched that of a Royal Flying Corps pilot on the Western Front, many drivers died in Ferraris. Among them were Eugenio Castellotti, Alberto Ascari, Luigi Musso, Peter Collins and Wolfgang von Trips. So, as we recalled last weekend, was Lorenzo Bandini, who perished 30 years ago on Saturday as a result of burns suffered when his Ferrari caught fire after crashing at Monaco's harbour-front chicane.

So when writers described Ferraris as "blood-red" they were suggesting, wittingly or otherwise, something more than just the colour of the bodywork. A sense of tragic destiny has never done the legend any harm.

MICHAEL Schumacher won last weekend's race in Monaco 50 years to the day after the first Ferrari, a tubby 1.5 litre sports model, made its racing debut at Piacenza in the hands of Franco Cortese, a gentleman amateur. Cortese retired while in the lead that day, but only two weeks later he captured Ferrari's first victory in an event held on a road circuit at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome.

When Schumacher joined the team last season, on a £16 million a year salary, he confessed without apology to a sketchy knowledge of the team's history. He is now in no doubt that however much victories such as Sunday's — Ferrari's first of the season, and their first at Monaco since 1981 — might enhance his own standing, they exist primarily to add a page to a greater tale.

Fortunately for him, he is beyond the reach of Enzo's mind-games. But he cannot escape the myth.

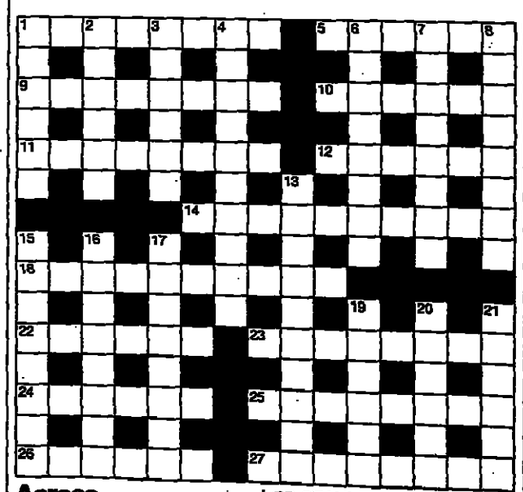


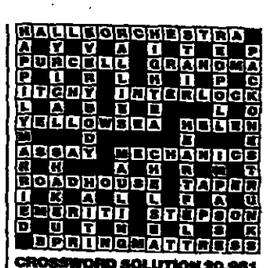
Our clan motto is Stand Fast, though in the Eastern Polish portion of the Highlands from which my grandparents came, when confronted by large gangs of vodka-sodden anti-Semetic peasants with knives, we modified it to Run Away. Linda Grant discovers her Scottish roots

G2 p7

Guardian Crossword No 20,962

Set by Logodaedalus





CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,961

Across

1,5 'Clickety-click' perhaps or a metaphor? (6,2,6)
9 Artillery soldier needing to wrap nitrogen in ball (8)
10 Champion callously shows what's available at all times (2-4)
11 To inspect drinking vessel might help Cyclops see (8)
12 Partners needing everything that is small (6)
14,18 Breakdown of beer celebration (Punch line) (8,2,5,5)
22 European describes one dressing (6)
23 Writer about to settle colour of boat of owl and pussycat (3-5)
24 Despicable person has back chat with sailor (6)
25 Quiet time-operated bedcover not finished (8)
26,27 Unhappy fate, unread and read, showed no pity (6,1,4,3)

Down

1 Female let down — Rose perhaps (6)
2 A what-d'you-call-it tagged for re-identification (6)
3 This is about a collaborator, I assure you (6)
4 Uncommon sort of table (10)
6 Lively page five taken from envelope? (8)
7 Tested cloth with cutter held aloft (8)
8 Successfully resists influence so very loudly (5, 3)
13 Inattentive, hot tempered, having jumped around (5-5)
15 Invite trouble like one thousand and one in stronghold (3,3,2)
16 This guiding principle could be lost, dear (8)
17 Wall of wood hides beasts going down to Aden nearly (8)
19 The programme of a low-down lawman (6)
20 Notice about a mongrel is fixed (6)
21 Rental is not settled for this branch (6)

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